Koviloor Digital Library

Sri Mookambika: The Radiant Grace

Acc.No: 3408
Cl: 38

Koviloor Digital Library

Koviloor Digital Library

33-1

Sri Mookambika
The Radiant Grace

Yea! knowing Me the source of all,
by Me all creatures wrought,
The wise in spirit cleave to Me,
into My Being brought.

— 'The Song Celestial,'
A poetic version of the Bhagavad-gita
by Edwin Arnold

"What lies behind us and what lies
before us are tiny matters compared
to what lies within us."

— Emerson

Koviloor Digital Library

INTEGRAL BOOKS
Our Mission

Modern biologists have to a great extent traced the mechanical laws of evolution whereas India's sages through their deeper search discovered the laws of Eternal Values - *Sanathana Dharma* - the spiritual thrust inherent in the lifestream prompting it to ever greater realms of unfoldment.

It is this awareness of the spiritual impetus beyond mechanism that helped India renew herself every age - a capacity so well highlighted in the words of Dr. Jagdish Chandra Bose : "By a continuous living tradition of rejuvenescence his land has readjusted itself through unnumbered transformations"

This vision of progress through constant inner renewal and expansion guided by the wisdom of a heritage that boldly explored into the very essence of life, has equipped India to make significant contributions for the evolution of a new human civilization.

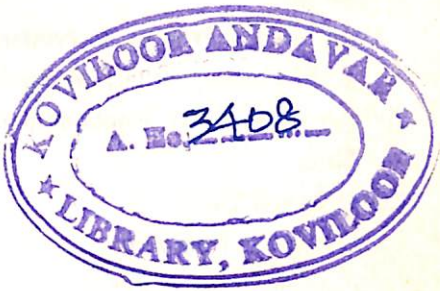
Presentation and promotion of the life-transforming values discovered by India's explorers of truth, with a modern orientation suited to our times, is a need of these days of turbulence to strengthen human consciousness and spirit, and we are dedicated to this mission.

Please send us your address. Wherever you are, we shall keep you informed about our publications.

Koviloor Digital Library

Sri Mookambika
The Radiant Grace

33-1



by
Srikant

INTEGRAL BOOKS
Payyanur, Kerala - 670 307

Koviloor Digital Library

Reprint March 1995
©All rights reserved
Published by
Integral Books
'Ayodhya
Payyanur, Kerala 670 307 India
Printed at
Codeword Process & Printers
Coelho Lane, Falnir, Mangalore - 575 001
The painting of Sri Mookambika on cover by
Sitra
Cover layout by
Shevgoor Fine Arts
Car Street, Mangalore
Photographs by
Jurgen Berg, R. Srinivasan,
V.M.K.N. Kanakkapilla, Srikant
Price:
In India Rs. 30/-
Foreign US $ 4.50 or equivalent
ISBN 81-86107-00-2

Other Books by the Author

1. Power in Temples – A New Look through Modern Science
2. Alphabet of Reality (Symbolic Significance of Deities):
   Series 1. Sri Ganesa
   2. Surya, the Sun

Koviloor Digital Library

३३-1

Contents

Foreword

1 Modern Man and Pilgrimage

2 The Temple of Divine Mother

3 The Legend and Its Message

4 The Holy Places Around

5 Sri Mahalakshmi Ashtakam

Koviloor Digital Library

FOREWORD

THE ADVENT OF English education and the onrush of modern scientific knowledge brushed aside, in the initial phases, India's deep vision of the inner nature of man and his destiny. As a result we Indians also began to think that the only knowledge was knowledge of the objective world. However, the emergence of great spiritual personalities like Sri Ramakrishna in the East and matured scientific minds in the West has helped to put a check to this retrogressive trend.

Now, the educated in India and elsewhere are giving more serious attention to ancient Indian thought and wisdom. This beautiful book, *Sri Mookambika : The Radiant Grace,* reflects this modern trend.

While science brings a great deal of knowledge about the external world, it is still very much ignorant about the inner nature of man. Unless man gets a firm grip on his real nature, all his deep knowledge of external world may, as we see today, turn to be a curse because of the disproportion in his

Koviloor Digital Library

understanding of the inner Reality and its creation, the outer world.

If he acquires knowledge about his inner self and thereby achieves control over his own mind and senses he becomes wise and strong enough to be a master of any situation and his own destiny. Then his knowledge of outside nature becomes a boon to him and the society. Then only can he be called a progressive man, a man of knowledge, as said in the Bhagavad-gita.

Temples and such pilgrim centres are the universities from where man can learn his lessons of self-knowledge.

The shrine of Divine Mother Sri Mookambika, surrounded by the soul-stirring sylvan charm of the Western Ghats, is such a centre providing an excellent venue for spiritual seekers. This book gives a beautiful description about this pilgrim centre. For the seeker who wishes to worship the Almighty in the form of the Divine Mother in this ancient place of spiritual communion, this is a very good guide. I wish the book warm reception from the public.

Swami Sakrananda
President Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama
Thiruvananthapuram 695 010

Koviloor Digital Library

Masthikatte, *the grove of the guardian deities of the forests by the main road, about three kms before reaching the temple of Sri Mookambika. The ancient environmentalists exhorted us to recognise the divinity of Nature and protect her bounties with care and reverence.* *(Photo : R. Srinivasan)*

Koviloor Digital Library

Modern man and pilgrimage

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL and the most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical," says Albert Einstein, "It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his mind and eyes are closed. The insight into the mystery of life coupled though it may be with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms — this knowledge, this feeling is at the centre of true religiousness."

This vision of the greatest genius of modern science points to the goal of all enquiry — the most radiant beauty within. As scientific knowledge advances, the wisdom slowly dawns in the modern mind that in the unknown depths of the atom and of the universe what man encounters is the mystery of his own depth.

Not long ago it was thought that science would ultimately overthrow all the age-old spiritual concepts and reconstruct human society on a purely materialistic basis. But as science makes rapid progress today, we see a different picture — every branch of it tending to converge with reverence to something 'mystical' which is 'the source of all true art and science'.

Standing on the footprints of the Rigvedic sages, the earnest scientist today tends to pray:

"By a golden lid
Hidden is the face of Truth
Uncover it, O Sustainer
Let the seeker behold it."

This humble attitude of the scientist while facing the deeper questions is well reflected in the words of Werner Heisenberg, one of the great nuclear physicists of our age, in his speech to an assembly of science students, "Take from your scientific work a serious and incorruptible method of thought; help to spread it because no understanding is possible without it. Revere those things beyond science which really matter and about which it is so difficult to speak".

Thus two great men of modern science declare that it is not unscientific to revere the higher aspects of nature which are beyond our rational comprehension.

Discovering the life of the Spirit

Modern man is pestered with tension. Doubts, anxiety and fear assail him. He tends to consider himself a meaningless product of chance without hope and a destiny. He fails to recognise any sublime harmony between himself and the universe. Only when he acquires that saving sense which Einstein calls 'true religiousness' can he become happy with himself and his environment. Carl Jung, the psychologist, from many of his clinical studies, is convinced that people who get relief easily from mental and physical afflictions are those who have turned to religion. Jung says, "We moderns are faced with the necessity of rediscovering the life of the Spirit. We must experience it anew ourselves. It is the only way in which we can break the spell that binds us to the cycle of biological events".

When one prays in a place of worship, the conducive atmosphere facilitates communion with the Inner Fact, which is the supreme Source. Sincere yearning for spiritual expansion refines the mind making one wiser, abler and happier.

Those who are exploiting religion and science, the two uplifting branches of human expansion, for narrow ends, have introduced evil in them. Modern man has to choose the freedom-giving spirit of these disciplines to rediscover the 'Life of the Spirit'.

A centre of spiritual power

Spiritual centres help activate the higher potentials in man. Such places function as divine dynamos bestowing peace and happiness to the earnest seekers. They come in contact with the Reality within, gain strength to face misfortunes, acquire new energy and hope and even experience miraculous turns in the course of life.

The renowned temple of Sri Mookambika is such a centre of spiritual power. Surrounded by the evergreen mountain ranges of the Western Ghats, the temple exerts an aesthetic and ennobling influence on thousands. Standing before the beautiful idol of the Divine Mother resplendent with spiritual grace, the devotee establishes contact with the uncaused Cause of everything, of all forms and qualities.

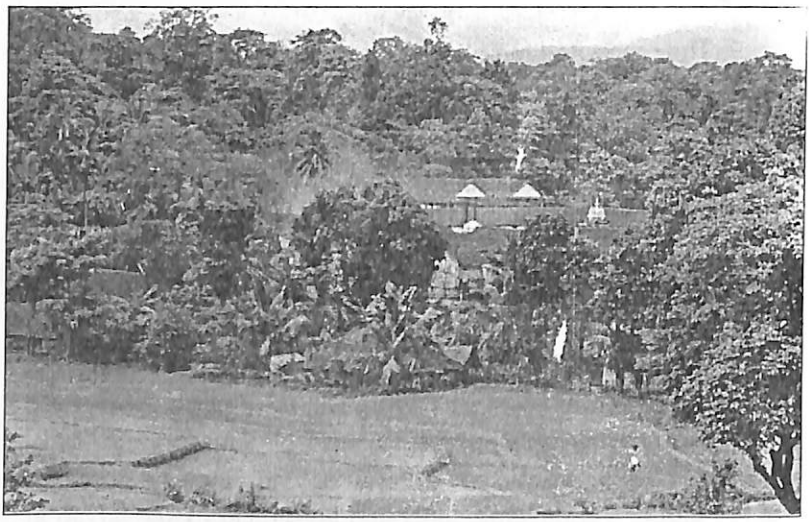
Let us hope that the natural beauty will always be maintained in its verdant charm. Living in the modern technological civilization, we often tend to assault the places of delight in the name of 'development' destroying their sanctity and gracefulness. Nothing should be allowed to mar the divine harmony of the place. All developments and constructions should go in

Koviloor Digital Library

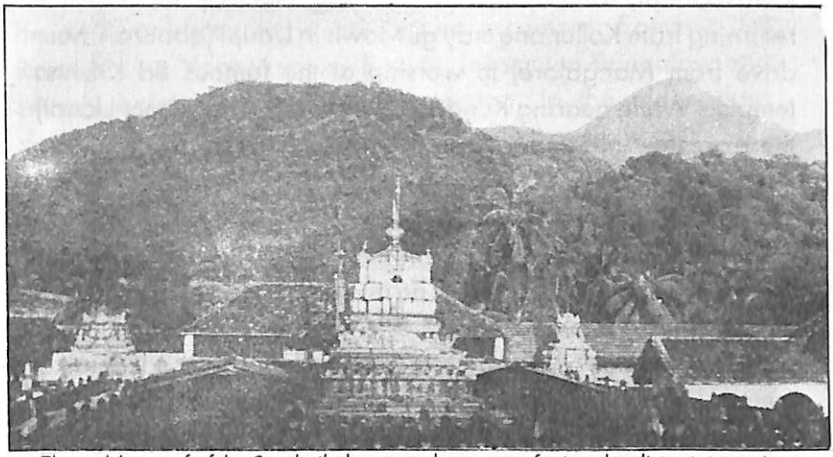
tune with the natural charm. Each pilgrim should see that the holy place is always clean and kept beautiful, regarding this as his/her sacred duty.

Let the trees bloom in their divine glory. New trees should be planted where old ones have fallen. Let the serenity and grace of this region always prevail, for the tension-ridden modern man has to visit now and then such sylvan abodes of quietitude with vibrant spiritual grace to seek that inward peace which reinforces him with inner strength and a greater vision.

A view of the temple from a nearby hill *(Photo : Jurgen Berg)*



Koviloor Digital Library



The golden roof of the Sreekoil, the central sanctum, facing the distant, towering Kundajadri peak on the right. (Photo : V.M.K.N. Kanakkabilla)

The temple of Divine Mother

ONE BEHOLDS FROM far-off places as one nears Kollur the awe-inspiring pyramidal peak of Kudajadri jutting into the skies, its mystic heights declaring the location of the holy temple of the Mother of the Universe — Sri Mookambika. Encircled by the mountains rich in lush tropical forests, the ancient temple is located by the gently flowing river with a charming name, Souparnika

Kollur, a quiet place charged with a heavenly peace, in the valley of Kudajadri, is 140 kms from Mangalore, on the north-eastern border of South Kanara district in Karnataka State. Mangalore is accessible by air, train or bus. Kollur is about three and a half hours' drive from Mangalore. Buses pass through the

Koviloor Digital Library

towns Udupi, Kundapur, Byndoor. On the way to, or while returning from Kollur one may get down in Udupi (about an hour drive from Mangalore) to worship at the famous Sri Krishna temple. While nearing Kundapur (an hour journey from Udupi) there are the Annegudde Sri Ganesa temple and Sri Koteshwara temple at Koteshwar. From Kundapur it is about two hours' journey to Kollur via Byndoor and one hour and a half through a shorter route via Vandse. On the way via Vandse, 18 kms before reaching Kollur, there is an ancient shrine at Maranakatte where the great mystic symbol Srichakra is worshipped. This temple which has a legendary association with Sri Mookambika temple has a large collection of very artistically carved and painted rustic figurines of wood and stone of the chieftains and retinue of Sri Mookambika. The whole journey through the beautiful and undulating coastal strip of Karnataka, passing through villages, towns, holy places, bridges spanning broad rivers and roads winding through the rich green forests of the mountainous Sri Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary, is very exhilarating.

From Bangalore there is a direct bus service to Kollur via Shimoga. There is also a direct bus connection from Madras. (Distances: Mangalore to Kollur via Vandse 140 kms; Udupi to Kollur 84 kms; Kundapur to Kollur 45 kms; Dharmasthala to Kollur via Manipal 220 kms; Sringeri to Kollur i. via Nagodi 114 km. ii. via Someshwara, Vandse 110 kms; Gokarna to Kollur via Bhatkal, Byndoor 140 kms; Bangalore to Kollur via Shimoga 400 kms.)

Accommodation

The temple Guest House on the north side of the temple and the Souparnika Guest House, a little away towards the

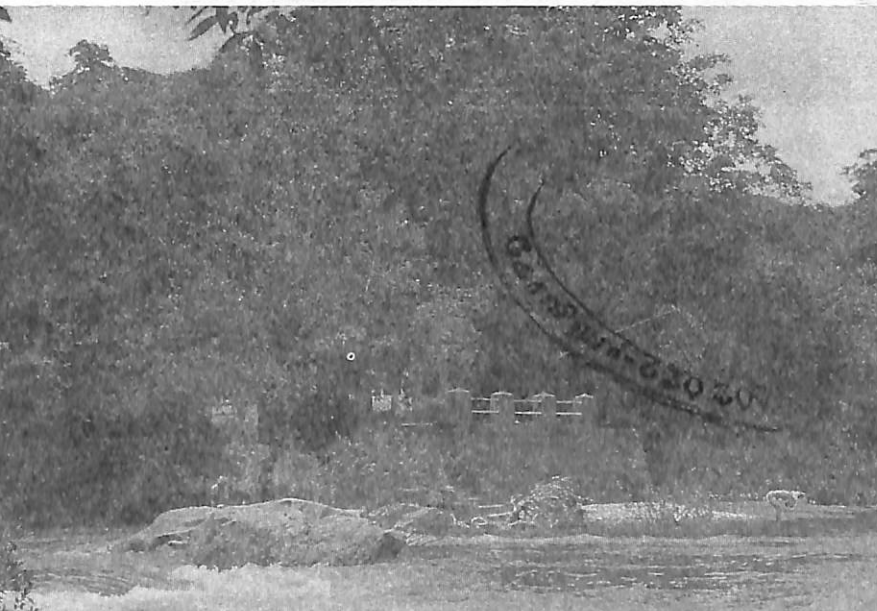
Koviloor Digital Library

north, are both managed by the temple; Sringeri Madam's guest house 'Sankarakripa'; Sri Sankarasramam Satram; Sri Ramakrishna Yogasramam; P.W.D. Inspection Bungalow and several lodges provide accommodation. In the olden days devotees used to get lodging and food in the houses of the temple priests, and this service is still maintained by some of them. For any special information one may write to: The Executive Officer, Sri Mookambika Temple, Kollur, Karnataka 576 220.

Revitalizing

A few days stay in the holy place revitalizes the pilgrim. Bath in the clear, sweet water of Souparnika, winding amidst the forest scenes, is a lingering experience. Two main streams, Kasi Theertham and Agni Theertham, originating from the Kudajadri mountain, join at Kollur to form the Souparnika. The streams

The Souparnika bathing ghat under thick forest greenery. The shrine of Sri Ganesa is in the background. (Photo : Jurgen Berg)



Koviloor Digital Library

reach Kollur flowing through forests rich in minerals and medicinal herbs. There is a cave, Garuda Guha, on the river bank near the main bathing ghat.

About one km towards the north-west of the temple is the main bathing ghat with a small shrine of Sri Ganesa on the bank. One is in the midst of an abundant variety of flora and fauna — langurs frisking in the trees, heavy-beaked hornbills winging their course over the river, flocks of green wild doves darting above.

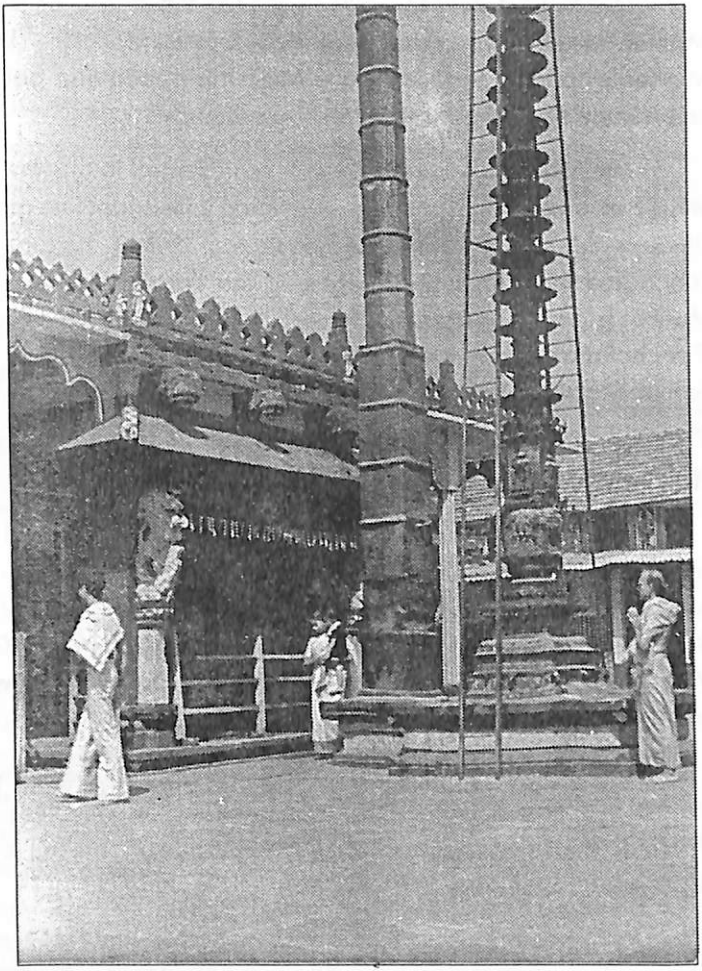
After the bath the pilgrim worships Sri Ganesa, the remover of all obstacles, and proceeds through the road lined with forest trees, viewing the glory of nature which culminates as the distant Kudajadri peak. At the junction of the bathing-ghat road and the main road there is a small shrine of Goddess Kali, who is represented by a six-foot high anthill. Every marvel of nature is seen by the spiritual vision of India as a pointer to the infinite creative potential of the supreme Reality and is treated with reverence.

Proceeding towards the east, one first reaches in front of the temple's western gate, and a newcomer is likely to take it for the main gate; but this is the rear gate which is kept closed. Tradition has it that the philosopher-saint Sri Adi Sankaracharya, the great exponent of Advaita philosophy, when first visited the holy place, entered the shrine through this gate and to commemorate this event the gate is kept closed except on special occasions.

The pilgrim takes half a round of the temple complex and reaches the front eastern gate facing the rivulet Agni Theertham and the lofty Kudajadri peak. He enters the vast open space with the main shrine in the centre and the shrines of the Parivara

Koviloor Digital Library

Entrance to the central shrine of Divine Mother with the many - tiered oil lamp and the flag-staff. (Photo : V.M.K.N.K.)



Koviloor Digital Library

Devatas — the accompanying Deities — around.

Divine Mother

The pilgrim reverentially steps into the shrine of Divine Mother. He stands in blissful serenity before the idol of the Divine Mother emanating grace abounding. The peace that passeth understanding is an unforgettable experience.

The Mother of the Universe is represented in this ancient temple as a young girl, Her face beaming with boundless grace, sitting in the mystic Padmasana pose, four armed, holding the conch and the discus and expressing the Varada and Abhaya Mudras (signs). The beautiful idol made of an alloy of five metals (Panchaloha), according to tradition, was installed by Adi Sankaracharya. Before Adi Sankara's arrival there was only the Jyothirlinga in the shrine.

The Jyothirlinga and its significance

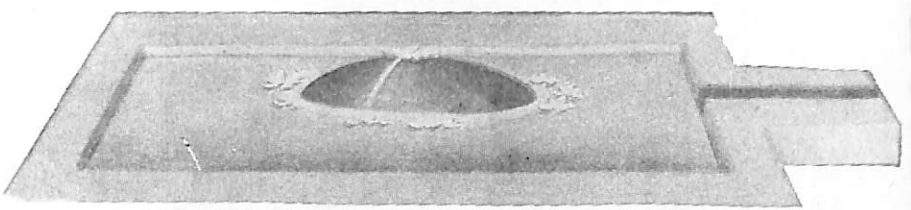
In front of the idol projects a little above the floor level the ancient Jyothirlinga, almost flat and round, potent with great mystic power. Legend has it that it was self-born in the 28th Dwapara Yuga of the present Manvantara, when the sage Kola Maharshi was doing penance there. That means it is very very ancient.

The Jyothirlinga is divided into two unequal parts by a golden line which will be sometimes shown to devotees by directing reflected sunlight towards it from a mirror. The left is the larger part.

The smaller part on the right of the golden line represents the conscious causative aspect of the supreme Reality, Brahman and its left, its creative energy aspect. The golden line

Koviloor Digital Library

symbolises their oneness. The right part figuratively represents Brahma (the terms Brahman and Brahma denote different concepts), Vishnu and Siva, the causative principles of creation, maintenance and dissolution. The larger left part represents Maha Saraswathi, Maha Lakshmi and , Maha Kali, the three aspects of the active Divine Power. Maha Saraswathi represents the Divine Energy that playfully stirs up from itself a mystic rhythm to originate the primordial Nature and makes it evolve its infinite possibilities through a means of self-fortifying inbuilt knowledge. Maha Lakshmi is that aspect of the Divine Power involved in the maintenance of the grand phenomenon and Maha Kali, the



The Jyothirlinga divided by a golden line into a large left and a smaller right part.

Power that withdraws the whole into the total oneness of Brahman. All these three great aspects of the supreme Energy of the supreme Reality are predominantly represented in the Jyothirlinga as the left larger part and that is why the supreme Divine Power is symbolised here by the graceful Mother Divine, Sri Mookambika. (In Indian philosophy the left side represents the female aspect, and energy is considered feminine.) According to the Tantras the Divine Mother is the supreme Source of all intelligent and mechanical forces of nature. The Rishis discovered that when the all-controlling Mother immanent in man is invoked, his consciousness unfolds its higher dimensions and to the extent

Koviloor Digital Library

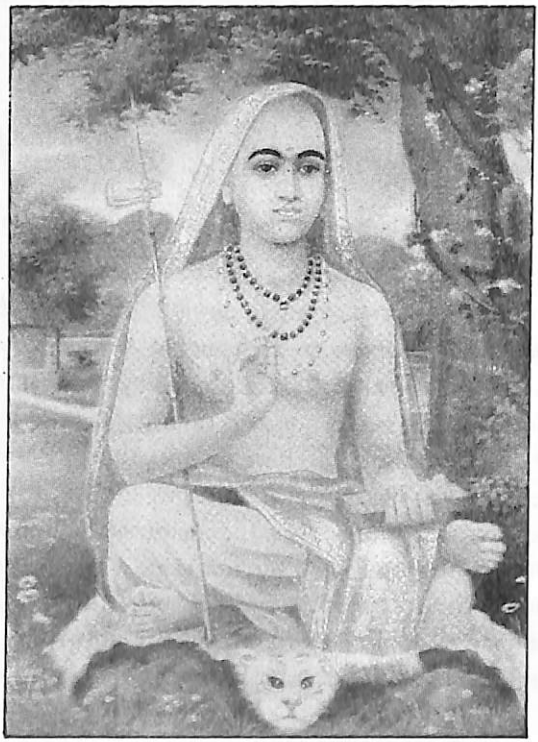
that he has achieved this he gets a certain degree of mastery over his mind and the forces of nature.

Adi Sankara's beatific vision

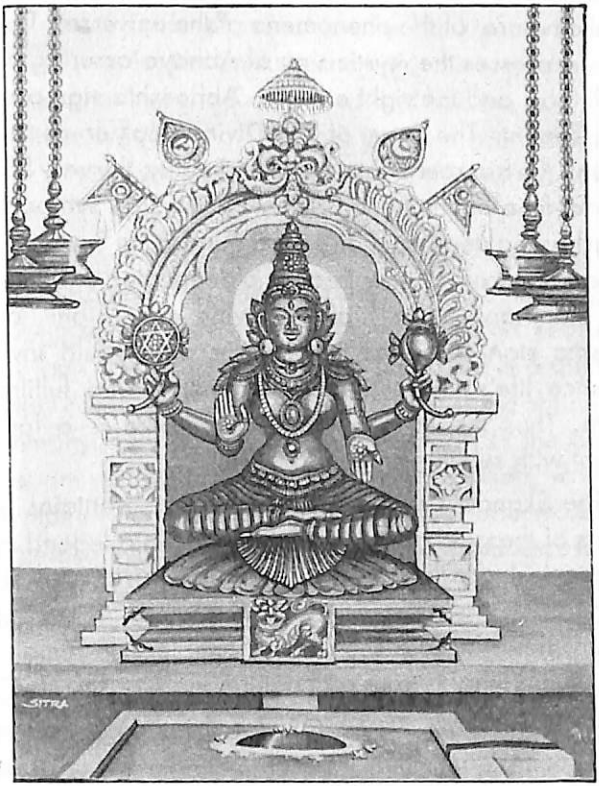
Adi Sankaracharya knowing the spiritual power of the Jyothirlinga visited the sacred place during his pilgrimages. There, the supreme Reality splendoured in his consciousness during meditation in a most beautiful and magnanimous form as the Divine Mother. According to tradition it was in the same form

---

Sri Adi Sankara had an ecstatic vision of Reality in the form of Divine Mother Mookambika at the holy place. Tradition has it that he sang his superb hymn Soundaryalahari *here as he was worshipping the Mother.*



Koviloor Digital Library



as he perceived the symbolic form of the Formless, the graceful idol was shaped and installed behind the Jyothirlinga.

The form and its meaning

The supreme Truth is thus symbolised here as the smiling form of Mother Mookambika. She has four arms. The upper left arm holds the conch and the right, the discus. The conch, which is blown to produce an auspicious vibrating sound, symbolises the field of subtlest universal vibration, Sabda Brahman, the Spirit-Energy foundation of the manifested universe which is

Koviloor Digital Library

represented by the Bijakshara ॐ. The discus symbolises time and the cyclic nature of the phenomena of the universe. The lower left arm expresses the mystic sign of Abhaya assuring freedom from all fear, and the right arm the Abheeshta sign promising life's fulfilment. The form of the Divine Mother as a whole represents the transcendental supreme Reality, the very Source of the matter-time phenomenon. The Abhaya sign symbolises the fact that he who steadfastly directs his mind to the Supreme would find liberation from all fear through a deepening understanding of the glory and eternity of his divine dimensions, and the Abheeshta sign reassures that such a one would invariably experience life's limitlessness, its meaning and fulfilment in freedom. Thus the form of Sri Mookambika is a language pregnant with sublime meaning.

The Skanda Purana, an ancient epic, contains profuse accounts of the glories of this great shrine. In a legend relating to the temple, Indra the king of gods, makes an interesting query to Sri Hari, who here represents the Supreme, "O the Supreme Brahman, now you are seen in this temple in a female form. Kindly tell me what is your real nature, male or female?"

Sri Hari replies, "Listen O Indra, the male and female are eternal principles involved in the projection of the universe. Yet they are never separate. Fundamentally they are one, as gold and the ornaments made of it are one."

The pilgrim stands before the Divine Mother unloading the burdens of his life at Her lotus feet. He is in communion with the uncaused Cause of everything—the Mother Supreme. He feels relaxed, elevated—the right mental atmosphere for the inner spiritual energies to wake up with their miraculous potentials and give life a rejuvenating touch.

After prayers while the pilgrim circumambulates the

Sreekoil, the inner shrine, he worships Lord Ganesa in a small shrine on the left side. On reaching the back of the Sreekoil he pays homage to Sri Adi Sankaracharya at the sacred spot where the philosopher-saint had meditated and had the ecstatic vision of the Universal Mother. This spot inside a room is known as Sankara Simhasanam. With special permission one can enter this room.

Coming out of the central shrine the pilgrim makes a round of it worshipping the Parivara Devatas—the accompanying Deities—in several shrines. First he worships Sri Veerabhadra Swamy (one of the terrific aspects of Lord Siva) in a shrine at the north-east corner. At the south-east corner is the shrine of Lord Subrahmanya. By its side, facing the north is the Saraswati Mandapam with an open hall where artists, poets, writers, and others make offering of their performances and works to Sri Mookambika, who is Kalaanidhi, the supreme Source of all arts. A few steps ahead towards the west on the same side is the shrine of Panchalingeswara, an aspect of Lord Siva. At the south-west corner is located a shrine where Lord Siva is worshipped as Sri Partheswara. (According to tradition it is at this spot where Kola Maharshi, the great sage after whom the place came to be known as Kolapura—now Kollur—had meditated.) On the left of Sri Partheswara shrine is the temple of Sri Panchamukha Ganapathi—Lord Ganesa with five faces. Next to this are two shrines where Lord Siva is worshipped as Chandramouleswara and Nanjundeswara, respectively. At the north-western corner is the shrine of Sri Hanuman and next to it is that of Lord Mahavishnu. At the north-east corner, on the right of Sri Veerabhadra's temple, is a small shrine of Sri Gopalakrishna.

Outside the wall surrounding the temple, at the north-west corner near the temple Guest House, is the shrine of Goddess Sri

Koviloor Digital Library

Chowdeswari, the Kshetra Palini—the guarding Deity of the temple.

Thousands in the grip of problems have experienced the transforming grace of the Divine Mother. Specific instances need not be mentioned here. They are innumerable. Every earnest devotee must have experienced it. She dwells in everyone with all her glories. When one invokes Her, miracles do happen, for nothing is impossible for the Divine Mother immanent in us with Her infinite potentials. Problems agitating the mind dissolve themselves. The realm of understanding expands, the realm of inner peace expands. Many a life has been thoroughly transformed in Sri Mookambika's Presence.

Many devotees who have expanded their being by Her Grace are shining examples. By worshipping the Divine Mother they have activated their inner talents. As sage Pathanjali, the great exponent of Yoga, points out, human faith increases with actual experience. Those who earnestly pray to Her will certainly experience Her abounding Grace and guidance.

Many Gods

The worship of many Gods in Hinduism sometimes causes confusion even in some worshippers who do not grasp its profound significance and practical wisdom.

Hinduism fundamentally asserts the reality of the Supreme Brahman, the uncaused Cause of everything, the one Source of infinite qualities and forms. The phenomenal worlds with all their special dimensions, qualities and diversities emerge from the supreme power inherent in Brahman. It is from this basic standpoint Indian philosophy gives freedom for many forms of worship and worship of many Gods. The individual has the

Koviloor Digital Library

freedom to concentrate his mind on any elevating godly form as his Ishta Devatha, a personal aspect of Reality, dearest to his heart, with the understanding that every aspect is an aspect or bhava of the Supreme. Thus the Supreme, for example, assumes Krishna Bhava, Devi Bhava, according to the devotional mood of the worshipper. They are all one and the same. That is why in the Vayu Purana it is said, "He who fanatically affirms the superiority of one Deity or Avatara over another is a sinner".

A Practical philosophy of human evolution

This freedom of spiritual striving based on a lofty concept and knowledge minimises conflicts owing to diversities in human psychological trends and help evolve an all-inclusive, broad-based spiritual outlook which is the characteristic of Indian culture. Human mind conditioned by qualities cannot comprehend Brahman without qualities, yet, the Source of all qualities. However, the higher divine qualities and values immanent in consciousness can be activated by directing the mind on a divine form that represents these qualities and values. This will help one to evolve to higher dimensions of consciousness and freedom. This practical philosophy does not restrict man to the stage of blind worship or static piety; it aims at human evolution to divinity. Worship of an Ishta Devata, the Personal God, is a practical step in this direction.

Personal God represents the higher aspects of Brahman and in the supreme sense, is Brahman Itself. As Jawaharlal Nehru says, "There appears to be a definite stopping place beyond which reason, as the mind is at present constituted, cannot go". How to go beyond it and evolve further was the enquiry of India's sages. They evolved several methods. The

Koviloor Digital Library

worship of a Personal God is one of them which employs a higher imaginative faculty as an aid for this breakthrough. This is a very scientific evolutionary method which requires steady practice.

In ordinary states man tends to remain in his mundane reasoning without cultivating the awareness of the higher facts of life and the result is his over-indulgence in mind-narrowing selfishness inviting suffering for himself and society. As one ordinarily regards a piece of stone only as an inert material, failing to recognise its immense nuclear potentials, in ordinary reasoning one fails to perceive the evolutionary spiritual potentials in man the activation of which can make him a superior being. Personal Gods symbolise these higher spiritual potentials latent in everyone.

Worship of the Ishta Devatha helps unfold the deeper spiritual dimensions, leading one step by step to the freedom of higher knowledge and the Bliss of Supreme Existence.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa has shown us a great example of how one can through worship of Personal Gods representing the higher spiritual aspects ultimately attain the Supreme Consciousness. By worshipping a Personal God the devotee worships the Supreme Brahman Itself. With this understanding one can open one's heart to the divine power in any place of worship, benefitting from the special powers of the Supreme manifesting there as a Personal God. There need be no conflict among different forms of worship or religions if this important point of the Hindu worship is clearly understood. The Supreme assuming the very form and Bhava (aspect) of the Ishta Devatha helps the devotee and leads him in his spiritual expansion. The central text of Hinduism, Srimad Bhagavad-gita

asserts:

"In whatever way devotees approach ME
Even so do I reach them and look after them."

Here 'ME' indicates the Supreme Brahman.

It is the Power—Sakthi—of Brahman that energises the idol and assumes the powers and aspects of a Deity in a temple, and radiating spiritual lustre through the idol inspires the devotee to lift himself to the higher dimensions of spiritual life. An idol vibrant with spiritual power is basically a projection of the divine latent in man activated by his higher faculties of imagination and artistic talents. The idol expresses the divine while the divine is unfathomably more than the idol. The idol is a key to open the door to our immeasurable divinity, Freedom Supreme.

When one totally surrenders to the Deity—that is when one frees oneself from the oppressive limitations of the personal ego to draw upon the unlimited powers of the Higher Self—the Deity, as assured in the Bhagavad-gita, looks after him in all respects. The Divine Grace leads him forward.

The Deity in essence is Brahman. In many a hymn a Deity is extolled as Brahman. In a famous hymn on Divine Mother Sri Mookambika in the Skanda Purana, the Mother is described thus: "O Devi, Thou manifested Thyself from the One indivisible Brahman. Thou then engaged in the play of creation. As one engaging in creation Thou art called Gauri and as the playful one Thou art called Kumari. Prostrations to Thee O Mahalakshmi, Goddess of Kolapura."

A visit to this great seat of active spiritual power is very propitious, *bhukthi mukthi pradayakam,* bestowing worldly harmony and the freedom of spiritual life.

Koviloor Digital Library

Open oneself to divine action.

When one enters a place of worship the doors of the heart should be kept opened — one should try to tune oneself to be receptive to the divine power to get the maximum benefit from the visit. His sole aim should be the communion with the Spirit that guides and removes the obstacles on his path and lifts him to higher levels of consciousness; for this, he stands before the sanctum sanctorum for the action of the divine power, like a patient before a doctor, like a block of marble before the sculptor. One who cultivates this attitude expands himself by a visit to a place of worship. During such visits one should try to maintain a serene mind—of course, the spiritual atmosphere in temples helps it — for the communion with the Divine Power.

Sages discovered the places of active spiritual energy, or activated it by their special methods in some centres and bequeathed these treasures to us to use them wisely for our cultural and spiritual expansion. Their aim of thus helping the spiritual unfoldment of the human mind should not be narrowed down by degrading their purpose. Sometimes centres of spiritual power, after remaining in oblivion for a period, resurrect themselves manifesting a new graceful energy as if by a divine programming. The miraculous resurrection of Thuluvannur Sri Mahavishnu temple on the banks of the river Palthirapuzha at Payyanur, Kerala, is a recent example of such a manifestation.

Many systems and one goal

Several systems of devotion, Yoga practices, artistic and scientific pursuits help the total growth of man. Through these creative exercises of the brain and mind and one-pointed striving for a higher ideal, man progresses towards his evolutionary goal—the expansion of consciousness. By worshipping the

Koviloor Digital Library

Deity—that is, by invoking the spiritual powers latent in him—he transcends his animality to rise to superior manhood. The Pujas, rituals, festivals, etc., make this evolutionary process of invocation effective, colourful and joyous.

Work, worship and knowledge

Devotion without an earnest effort for right intellectual understanding may degrade itself into self-righteous fanaticism and superstition. The ancient philosophical treatise Surya Gita says, "Without knowledge one will not succeed in perfecting meditation. Without fortifying one's inner life through meditation one cannot achieve perfection in work. Without work and meditation one cannot achieve right knowledge. These three — knowledge, meditation and work—help one another and together lead man to peace, perfection and freedom. If one neglects one of these disciplines obeying the advice of wrong teachers one cannot achieve liberation."

In the olden days temples were great centres where all these disciplines were promoted, as the great spiritual explorers of yore knew that faith without knowledge would not be conducive to harmonious inner development. Many arts—even martial arts — and sciences that help man in his physical mental and spiritual evolution were perfected and studied in the vicinity of great temples.

Ancient discoveries and modern science

The ancient explorers of India acquired faith in a Supreme Power, through bold reasoning and inquiry. They gained supreme wisdom pushing ahead stage by stage, searching, doubting, learning, meditating and persevering till the intuitional faculties powerfully expressed in them, revealing to them the inner secrets of life and the universe.

Koviloor Digital Library

Their inquiries form an ocean of knowledge, which if explored with an open mind, will supply valuable clues for modern thought for greater discoveries on the existential secrets of man.

They discovered the various subtle currents of energy in the body. (The ancient treatment by acupuncture, now revived in China, which is raising deeper questions for modern science to consider, and India's still subtler science of Marma Vidya—which was specially vogue in Kerala, now almost extinct—must have been rooted in this knowledge.) In recent times, modern physiology has also become aware of the electrical currents in nerve fibres.

The Rishis perceived the activity of a super intelligent energy medium, which they called Prana, in the visible and subtle functioning of the body. (They classified it into several types according to special functions. What keeps the bodies of some Yogis undecayed for several days after demise, it is said, is the continued presence of a certain aspect of Prana called Phalguna.) They also found that this subtle creative energy of Brahman is concentrated in the lowest part of the spinal column, the Muladhara. (It is remarkable that the cerebro-spinal system was a focus of attention centuries before modern physiology began probing it!) They called this energy concentration as the Kundalini—the coiled-up one, for normally the major part of its great potential remains in an inactive state. When Kundalini is activated, man evolves stage by stage to higher levels of consciousness, with the expression of higher talents and even acquiring the so-called supernatural faculties known as Siddhis mentioned in the Yoga Sutras of Sage Patanjali.

Koviloor Digital Library

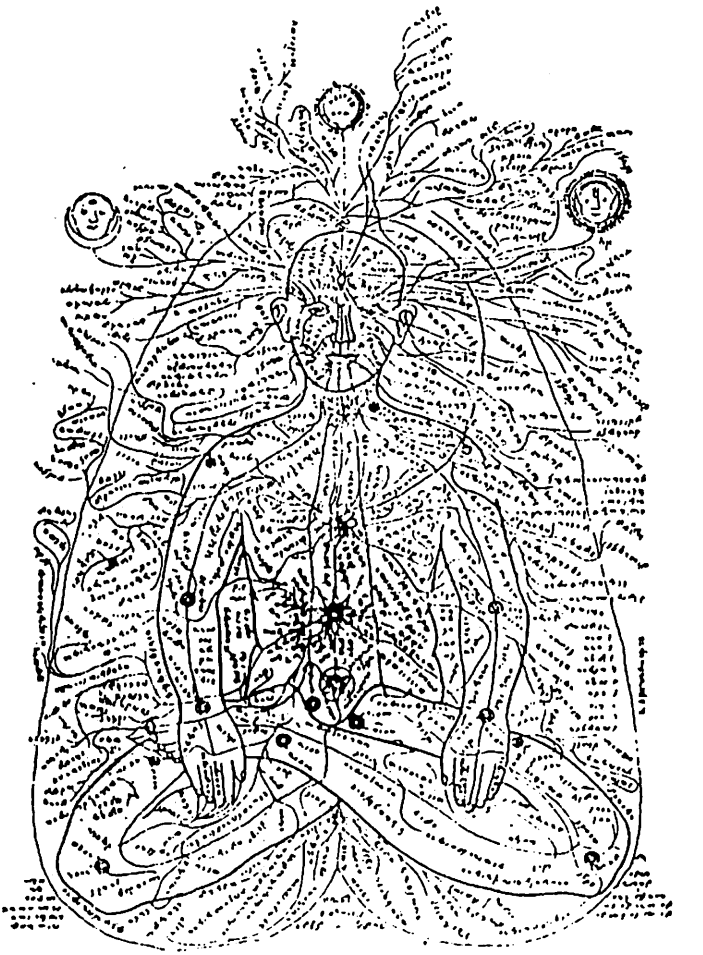
The sages discovered through their experiments that the full activation of Kundalini, the consciousness-expanding spiritual energy, would provide man the supreme spiritual wisdom expanding his being to the Turya consciousness, which frees him from the grip of time and space and from the biological cycle of birth and death.

Spiritual expansion

This energy wakes up through various means. Devoted concentration on a Personal Deity, who symbolises ethical and spiritual values, is one among them. Even in people who have no faith in the divine nature of life, Kundalini energy is roused by earnest dedication to an ideal or work; but when it is roused without a conscious effort to grow in spiritual wisdom through study, ethical living and inner search to embrace the Higher Self, man will not acquire a universal spiritual vision and the freedom of such a state, the natural result of an expanded consciousness. His ego swells up and he tends to misuse his developed intellect and its talents, which eventually brings him misery and downfall. An effort for a harmonious intellectual and spiritual growth leads man to greatness and fulfilment in life.

Here the illuminating words of Bertrand Russel are very relevant, "Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be an increase of sorrow." The extraordinary talents seen in some people are the result of some degree of activation, consciously or unconsciously, of this all-powerful, consciousness-expanding divine energy, Kundalini.

The sages evolved means of activating this energy by conscious effort. One of them is the devoted concentration on the Supreme Energy—the Divine Mother. There are places, centres



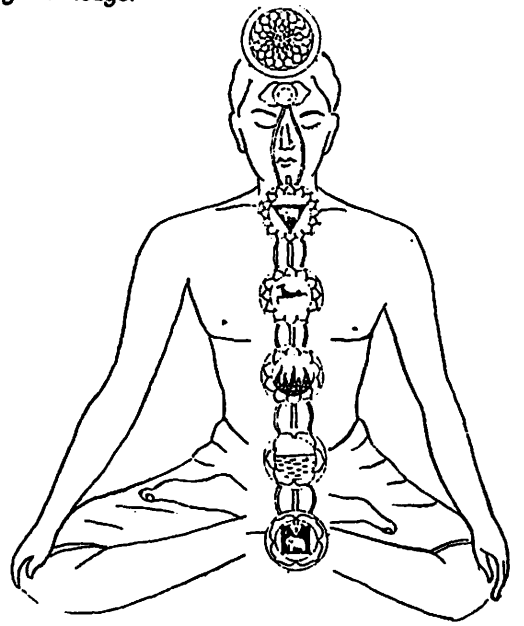
An old sketch based on the Yogic knowledge of the subtle channels of Prana, the bio-psychic energy currents. The major centres of energy activation called the Chakras, the main channels along the spinal column, the solar and lunar aspects of energy, the numerous sub-channels, the various power-spots in the body, etc., are marked. India's Marma Vidya, the knowledge of vital spots, and the acupuncture revived in China, are based on this knowledge of the subtle

Koviloor Digital Library

energy currents.

India's ancient explorers had a very deep knowledge of the human body, the mind and its great potentials. Issac Asimov in his book 'The Human Brain' writes, "The modern idea of the brain as the seat of thought and through the nerves the receiver of sensation and the initiator of motion was not definitely established until the 18th century". It is thought-provoking that many centuries before that the Rishis of India declared the brain as the potential seat of the supreme state of consciousness and they chalked out energy centres and channels of energy currents. It is remarkable that they gave prime importance to the cerebro-spinal system and regarded it as the basis of the future evolution of man!

Deepening the knowledge of the inner nature of man is the most effective way to counteract the terribly materialistic trends of today that play havoc with human life and nature. It is a synthesis of the ancient and modern explorations that is going to help the evolution of a superior human being and in this effort for transformation India's ancient texts will prove to be a profo- -l fund of illuminating knowledge.



Koviloor Digital Library

of active spiritual energy, which helps this effort for spiritual evolution. They are the great pilgrim centres, and irrespective of the religious differences, they help activate the evolutionary spiritual forces in man. An earnest seeker invariably experiences that profound influence, that Grace, that experience of Love in the temple of Sri Mookambika.

Srichakra

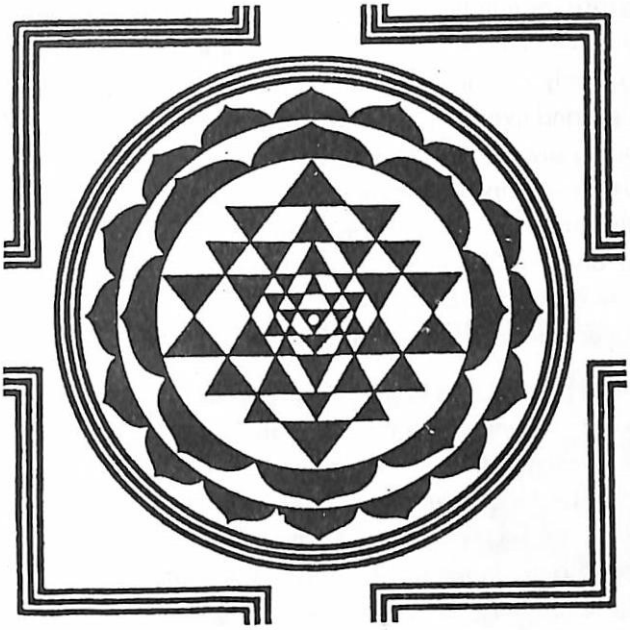
In the worship of Divine Mother, the renowned mystic design, Srichakra assumes much significance. We normally tend to represent the Supreme Truth in a symbolically modified human form because it is the most perfect form conceivable to us. The Divine Mother is formless and with infinite forms. Usually a symbolically conceived female form is used to invoke the Mother Principle with infinite spiritual potentials.

But how to symbolise the formless aspect of the One pregnant with infinite forms? Srichakra represents the formless One and the principles involved in its manifestation as infinite forms. The Mother is the source of all forms. She is not separate from the universe but immanent in it. She is the invisible Source and the visible Manifestation. This concept is well expressed as follows in Sri Devi Bhagavata, a mystic epic on the Universal Mother, as follows: "Whatever is, I am, the Eternal I, nothing else."

Srichakra symbolises the transcendental Supreme Truth as the supreme Source and the scheme of its evolutionary manifestation as the universe. Its structure is considered to be holding great spiritual power and is traditionally used in worship to invoke Divine Mother's blessings.

Srichakra is called the king of Chakras, the mystic designs. The central dot—Bindu—of the Srichakra represents the supreme

Koviloor Digital Library



transcendental Truth , Brahman. It is the inconceivable transcendental Source of infinite qualities, possibilities and forms. It is potent with the male and female (Siva-Sakti) principles, apparently opposite, yet complementary. It is the activation of these principles which causes the expression of the possibilities.

The first polarisation of these principles takes place by the primordial vibration in the central Bindu causing the activation of the Siva (male) and Sakti (female) principles, while the Central Truth, the Divine Mother, maintains Her transcendental all-encompassing Oneness.

The male (Siva) principle is represented by the first triangle enclosing the Bindu with the apex pointing upwards, and the female (Sakthi) principle, by the triangle pointing its apex

Koviloor Digital Library

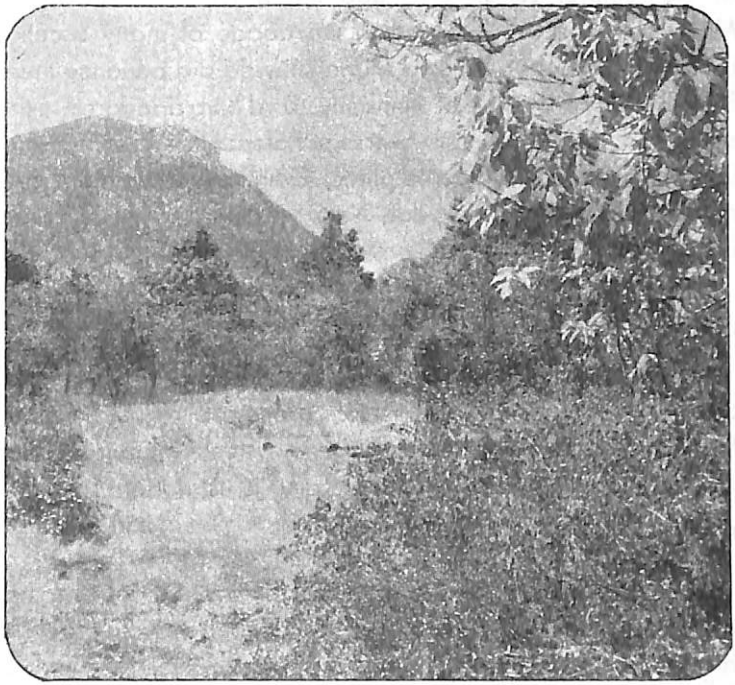
downwards within the Siva triangle. The one within the other indicates their fundamental unity amidst their apparent diversity. Subsequently nine triangles arise, four pointing upwards (Siva triangles) and five pointing downwards (Sakthi triangles). Their interlacing gives rise to forty three triangles. These indicate the various subtle principles involved in the evolution of the universe from the polarisations and recombinations of the male (conscious) and female (energy) principles immanent in the One Supreme Reality. This central portion of triangles thus symbolises the subtler stages of evolution of the universal phenomena.

This portion of triangles is surrounded by two concentric circles of eight and sixteen lotus petals, respectively. These are in turn surrounded by three more concentric circles. Outside them is a square of three lines which opens out at the middle of each side as four portals. All these symbolise the various principles and stages involved in the evolutionary expansion and the emergence of the universe, the final square portion indicating the formation of the material dimension. The open portals symbolise the limitlessness of the emerging universe from the limitless Reality.

Thus, Srichakra symbolises the plan of evolution of the universal phenomena through the polarisation of the two aspects of the One, represented by Lord Siva (Consciousness) and Goddess Sakthi (Energy) and the different stages of their intermingling. Meanwhile, it also points the way of spiritual expansion of man and his liberation. The powers symbolised as Goddesses with specialised powers and aspects as the presiding deities in the various stages of Srichakra represent the higher levels and aspects of Consciousness. The theme of Srichakra suggests that man can expand himself to Universal Consciousness through a broad-based and intelligent spiritual practice.

Koviloor Digital Library

Srichakra forms a very exhaustive subject. A detailed study of the subject is not in the scope of this book. Instead of dissipating the evolutionary energy in retrogressive preoccupations as the arms race, religious and ethnic rivalries, if mankind would make a serious effort to expand the horizon of knowledge from all available sources, ancient and modern, the integrated knowledge would lead to a super human civilization.



Koviloor Digital Library

the legend and its message

THE SKANDA PURANA tells us the ancient lore about the origin of the temple. Long, long ago the place was known as Maharanyapuram. It was then the abode of many ascetics including a great Yogi, Kola Maharshi who did penance there for years for the welfare of humanity. Lord Siva appeared to the sage and advised him to worship Parasakthi—the Supreme Divine Power—in that sacred place. Eventually a Jyothirlinga—now seen in front of the idol—was self-born there. The Lord installed in the Linga the all-powerful mystic symbol, Srichakra.

Lord Siva advised the sage to worship the Linga and told him that Parasakthi would appear in that sacred place in due course in the form of Mahalakshmi, and the sacred Linga would always be dynamic with Her presence. This place, Maharanyapuram, later came to be known as Kolapuram after the great sage. The present name Kollur is its modern form.

The demon of darkness

Now, a demon called Kamhasura, who had acquired his tremendous power by worshipping Parasakthi as Kala Bhairavi through severe penance, began terrorizing the three worlds. Demoniac characters will get inexorably egoistic once they get powers and will forget the supreme Source of all powers. He conquered the three worlds striking havoc everywhere. There-

Koviloor Digital Library

upon, Parasakthi assumed the form of Tripurasundari to destroy him. Kamhasura escaped to the Rishyamooka mountain and began performing intense austerities there in order to propitiate Lord Siva for the boon of immortality

The gods came to Kolapuram and along with Kola Maharshi worshipped Parasakthi in the form of the all-powerful Devi and sought Her intervention to protect the worlds from the terrible consequences of Kamhasura attaining immortality. Devi thereupon cursed Kamhasura rendering him dumb (Mooka). Thus he was unable to ask for the boon. Kamhasura now came to be known as Mookasura. (These are highly symbolic stories on the struggle between the trends of retrogression and the forces of evolutionary expansion in man.)

His plan having failed, Mookasura with doubly renewed rage began to spell destruction. Devi appeared accompanied by Her many divine forces, and in a terrible battle the demon was beheaded. Mookasura thus attained supreme liberation, for when the evil nature in one is destroyed by divine action one verily becomes divine, as fundamentally everything is divine only. Therefore, Puja is performed in the temple in honour of Mookasura also, who despite his demoniac nature ultimately attained his fundamental divinity.

Darkness realises the glory of Light

In the last stage of his battle with Divine Mother, the demon Mookasura realised that the darkness of evil, however powerful it might become, would have to bow down at last before the might of Light. He repented and prayed to the Divine Mother to bless that place with Her graceful presence in order to harmonise the lives of generations by dispelling darkness from their hearts. The gods and Rishis also implored Her so, and accordingly, after

the destruction of Mookasura, the Divine Mother, with all Her accompanying forces, disappeared in the Bindu of the mystic Srichakra of the Jyothirlinga worshipped in the temple.

The message of the legend

Most of the legends in Indian mythology have a profound message. The Divine Mother, the slayer of Mookasura , is called Mookambika—the Mother who destroyed the demon of dumbness. Mookasura literally means the Demon of Dumbness. The demon lives in human beings in varied stages of manifestation. Man is often selfishly mute to the sufferings of his fellow beings. This unsympathetic, mute personality in him has a demoniac retrogressive urge to dominate, oppress and exploit others to further his selfishness. But he has in him the evolutionary godly forces that urge him to exceed himself and grow to greater heights. These two opposing traits are in a constant struggle. It is by the conscious invocation of the universal spiritual values inherent in him—symbolised by Devi and Her helpers—he vanquishes the pain-giving demon of this insensitive dullness and evolves to the universality and freedom of his divinity. The Divine Mother when invoked removes the inertia of dullness in man and leads him to an awareness of the supreme knowledge of his immortal being, as longed in the prayer , *Mrityor ma amritam gamaya'* , 'Lead me O Lord from death to Immortality'.

This symbolism of slaying the demon in man is well revealed in the following prayer to Sri Mookambika in the Skanda Purana, "O Divine Mother, those who lack intelligence and power of expression invoke Thee, and Thou uplift them bestowing talents and spiritual wisdom. Therefore, Thou art known as Mookambika. Prostrations to Thee O Mahalakshmi, Goddess of Kolapura." It is no wonder that artists, musicians,

Koviloor Digital Library

writers and people in the grip of problems that obstruct the smooth flow of life earnestly seek Her Grace. The shrine expresses that most compassionate Divine Love immanent in nature which expresses in all beings as the motherly consideration for the offspring. Basically love is an awareness of unity in the oneness of Universal Consciousness despite separate states of bodily existence. Ordinarily this sublime sense is coloured and clouded in various degrees by mental conditioning and circumstances. This sense of oneness is predominantly present in motherly love. The wellbeing we usually experience in the presence of the spiritually evolved is because of the emanation of universal love that transcends the limitations of individuality. An earnest pilgrim experiences this sense of exalted wellbeing bestowed by this sublime love in the presence of Mother Mookambika.

The cause of evil

The message of the legend reveals that the human mind with its inherent forces and faculties, as it has a relative freedom of choice, often tends to assume a demoniac character by developing the self-oppressive pride, egoism and greed. The Divine is the ultimate source of all power. But man's inflated ego tends to misuse the power he has. He becomes irrational, forgets the supreme Source and deflects from the path of his natural evolution to a higher stature. This is the cause of evil. The dull, swelled up ego, Mookasura, with all the forces he can muster, will resist and put up a fight against man's evolutionary journey to divinity. The struggle between the self-contracting forces of egoistic selfishness and the spiritual values which expand him to his fellow beings and finally to the eternity of Existence, intensifies. Mookasura, the demon of dullness and ignorance,

Koviloor Digital Library

though powerful, has to give way and man is destined to evolve and gain the freedom of divinity. Why should he delay his destined freedom? He should send the Devas in him (activate the spiritual values in him) to invoke the Mother Divine and seek Her intervention in the struggle. Even a little thrust in spiritual expansion, as the Bhagavad-gita assures, liberates one from great fear. He becomes aware of the Source of everything. As this awareness intensifies, he experiences the expanding realm of freedom within. His mind reaches to embrace a universal dimension finding a new meaning in life and its destiny.

The legend proclaims that the forces of goodness would ultimately vanquish the evil. That is progress. In human life and in the long history of the world this is a proven fact. That which is higher is destined to triumph over the lower.

The Divine Grace

In the days of yore kings and commoners alike crossed all the hazardous terrains and unbridged rivers to seek the Grace of Sri Mookambika. Today the journey is much easier with bridges spanning the broad rivers and calm zig zag roads bordered with evergreen jungles. Every earnest devotee will have something to say about the Grace received. In case of some, it maybe amiraculous incident, in some, a gradual transformation for the better. The earnest receives a new, refreshing strength, the divine help.

From the unknown past, centuries after centuries, this holy place has been a centre of worship, perhaps with widely varying modes following different customs. Tradition has it that the present form of rituals and Pujas were prescribed by Sri Adi Sankaracharya. According to some historical records, the temple was reconstructed in the present form in 1140 A.D. by Venganna

Koviloor Digital Library

Samanthar of the Binki royal family of Halkal in Karnataka.

Queen Chennamma, the heroic queen of the Keladi kingdom of Karnataka, who gave asylum to Prince Raja Ram, son of Chattrapati Sivaji and dealt a crushing blow to the invading armies of the emperor Aurangazeb driving them back out of her mountain kingdom, was an earnest devotee of Sri Mookambika. She always felt the protective hand of the Mother.

A beautiful fact about God is that every earnest devotee finds the Lord closest to him/her as a companion, a protector. This is the fact which is so delicately and romantically signified in the Rasa Kreeda—Krishna's Dance of love with the Gopis—in Srimad Bhagavatha. Every Gopi feels that Krishna is with her, feels him exclusively her own. But there is a danger that even devotion may sometimes degenerate into a sort of egoistic self-glorification. This makes one self-centred causing obstacles in spiritual progress. To guard the Gopis from such a situation Krishna gives them pain by spontaneously disappearing from their midst. They should be made aware of His transcendental nature even as they take Him as an individual dearest to their heart. The pangs of separation sent them in search of Krishna everywhere. They ask the trees, animals, stones and everything else about the whereabouts of Krishna. And in such an earnest seeking when they forget their limited selves so absorbed in Krishna, the Krishna Consciousness dawns in them with the most pleasant revelation that everything is nothing but Krishna Himself. In such an awareness they realise that they had never lost Krishna and they themselves are Krishna Himself in their core. Then the Lord returns to them in His eternal glory and embraces them — an enchantingly beautiful story of the pilgrimage of the apparently limited individual to find his identity with the Supreme.

Koviloor Digital Library

Pujas

The temple opens early morning at 5 A.M. One experiences an unforgettable sense of sublime peace at the time of Nirmalyam, the redecoration of the idol with flower garlands in the early hours. Then follows the Dantadhavana Puja and the Udayakala Puja. After the Sribali Pradakshina the devotees are given a nectarian Prasad, Gudu Shanti.

The Pujas of the noon begin at 11 A.M. and at about 1P.M. the Mangalarathi is performed. After Sribali Pradakshina the inner shrine is closed till 3 P.M.

The Pradosha Puja takes place at 7 P.M. It is a great occasion of devotional fervour. All the major Pujas are conducted in the shrine of Sri Veerabhadra also, just after their performance in the inner shrine. After the Sribali Pradakshina, the smaller idol which is taken out on such occasions is brought to the Saraswathi Mandapam where takes place Mangalarathi and Ashtavadhana Seva. Then the idol is taken back to the inner shrine. After the Puja, a sacred concoction, Kashaya Theertham, is distributed to devotees. It is a preparation of ginger, pepper, cardamom, tippali, lavangam, jaggari, etc., and is believed to have been introduced by Adi Sankaracharya as a Prasad of special medicinal value. The shrine closes at 9. P.M. Sri Chandika Homa is an important offering here.

Festivals

The main festival in the temple is the Ruthotsavam, the car festival, in the month of Phalguna (March-April). On the day of the Utram Star in the bright half of the month, the temple flag is hoisted and the car festival continues from that day to the day of the Moolam star—for nine days

On the bright half of the Jyesta month (June-July) in the Ashtami day there is a special festival as it is considered the day of the appearance of the Goddess. Special Pujas are performed in the days of Mahalakshmi Vrata, Maha Sivaratri, Sri Krishna Jayanthi, Vinayaka Chaturthi, Jyesta Lakshmi Vrata, etc.

The Navaratri, the nine nights in the autumn (September-October) is a very auspicious occasion when thousands visit the temple. The special rites during this period are the Navakshari Kalasa, the Chandika Homa, the Rathotsava, the Purnakumbhabhishka, etc.

There is a very colourful festival during November-December, Vana Bhojana, when during night the festival idol of Devi is carried by a decorated and colourfully illuminated country craft across the Souparnika and offered worship in the forest. There is a feast for all on the next day at the river bank amidst the forest scenes.

Festivals herald a new hope

Today man is in a grip of anxiety about his own future — an unparalleled juncture in history. Disharmony is depriving him the joy he can derive form the beauty of nature and from his artistic and spiritual being. He has to conquer his self-destroying negativity by imbibing the festive spirit of nature for his very survival.

Surrounded by the majestic mountains and the blooming forests with varied hues and fragrance, the shrine of Sri Mookambika invokes the springs of beauty in the human heart filling it with a joy divine. Thousands join in drawing the great chariot of the Divine Mother, symbolising the need of a joint effort of mankind to bring about a new civilization based on a higher

Koviloor Digital Library

spiritual vision of life.

The temple festivals suggest that man should make his inner depth, a great centre of festivity, of the joy of self discovery.

What is the way?

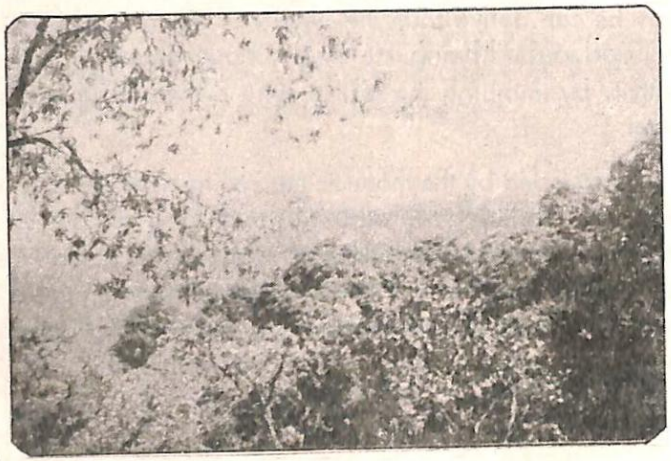
He has to make his mind a pit of Yajna fire of selfless work. He has to offer the negativity of his selfishness in that fire.

From that fire will manifest the Divine Mother, the all-loving Supreme, who allays all fears, who makes man the Man Divine.

How well *Sri Lalitha Sahasranama* the famous hymn to Divine Mother, describes this manifestation

Chidaghnikunda Sambhuthaa
Devakaarya Samudyataa

"Prostrations to Thee who manifests in the Yajna fire pit of consciousness, who helps fulfill the Goal Divine!" — the goal of the evolution of a super human civilization, when human heart will turn to be a scene of freedom and festivity. The temple festivals remind man of this destined possibility.



Koviloor Digital Library

The holy places around

THE ENTIRE ENVIRONMENT of the temple makes an impact on the visitor by its holy aura and natural beauty. Many a cave in the forests, hand-hewn and natural, suggest that the place must have been a Tapobhumi, a land of austerities and meditation from ancient times. There must have flourished great civilizations as revealed by the huge bricks, granite blocks, and the relics of buildings. Civilizations rose and fell while the great centre of worship survived the onslaught of time giving spiritual solace and insight to many a generation.

Cool serene Souparnika

The river Souparnika meandering through serene jungles is as beautiful as its name itself. Some literary works, many a house and cultural organisation bear the delightful name of this holy river. Several fine springs—among them are 64 Theerthas—originate from Kudajadri and join to form two rivulets called the Kasi Theertham and the Vahni Theertham. Their confluence takes place at a spot north-west of the temple to form the holy Souparnika. Bathing in Souparnika is invigorating to the body and mind. According to the legends, Suparna, the eagle-mount

Koviloor Digital Library

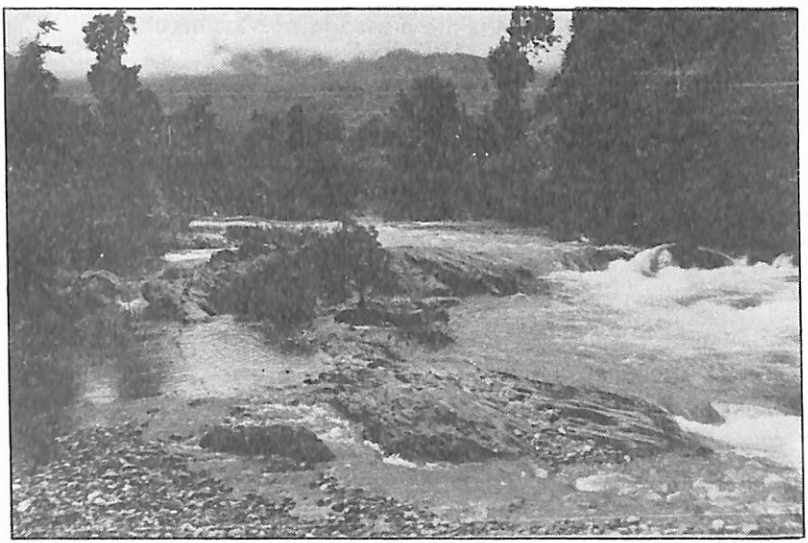
of Lord Vishnu, did penance on the bank of the river and hence it is called Souparnika.

The legend has it that Garuda, the eagle-mount of Lord Vishnu performed austerities worshipping the Divine Mother, on the banks of the sacred river. Garuda is also known as Suparna, and it is from this word the river derived its charming name, Souparnika. On the eastern rocky slope of the river, under the spreading forest trees there is a cave, Garuda Guha, near the Garuda Guha

Koviloor Digital Library

Ashram.

*Many legends in India's philosophical texts have indepth meaning. The word Vishnu means,*Vyaa veshti iti Vishnu, *that which is 'the all-pervading'—the changeless Reality, the basis of the apparently changing phenomena of the universe. The colour of Vishnu's body is light blue—the blue of the infinite space. Vishnu is the Supreme Soul—the Cosmic Intelligence—whose body is Gagana Sadrisam — space-like, the space which Einstein says looks suspicious because everything originates from it, is maintained by it and dissolves into it! The eagle constantly floats in this mysterious unchanging space and is a good symbol to represent the creative motion originating in space that gives rise to the phenomenon of ihe universe. The very basis of matter and time is motion. Behind this creative motion is the unchanging Reality—symbolically, Lord Vishnu rides on His eagle-mount Garuda! The supreme power of that changeless Reality is Parasakthi, the Mother Divine. All the subtle and gross motions of the universe derive their power from that Supreme Source. Garuda - the motion in space—the mount of Lord Vishnu—is constantly meditating the Source of all power, the Divine Mother. Below : Souparnika* (Photo : J.B.)



Koviloor Digital Library

Sri Krishna Temple and Madhu Theertham

At the south-east corner outside the temple complex there is a Ganesa temple. A path from here towards the east which turns to the south leads to a small temple with an enchanting idol of Sri Krishna. From here a short walk into the forests takes one to a holy spot, Madhu Theertham.

The legendary Sukla Theertham and Masthikatte

A pleasant walk of about two kilometres westward from the temple through the main road bordered by jungles takes the pilgrim to Sukla Theertham. There is a small shrine of lord Siddeswara, believed to have been founded by the ancient sage Sukracharya. About a kilometre from here is the Masthikatte where the guardian deities of the forests are worshipped.

Treat nature with reverence, maintain its freshness and live in harmony with it—this is the message of Masthikatte.

Exhilarating pilgrimage to Kudajadri and Chitramoola

The sublime heights of the Kudajadri peak attracts all lovers of nature. From its top the pilgrim witnesses God's boundless glory in the beauty of nature. It is a place rich in historical importance and mystic significance.

From ancient days this distinctive 1400 - metre high peak has been a well known landmark to sailors as it is visible at a great distance. It is situated 13.51'N and 74.52' E. On the very mountain top there is a small shrine-like structure made of granite blocks. This is commonly known as Sarvajna Peedam and is believed to have been built at the place where Adi Sankaracharya sat absorbed in meditation.

Koviloor Digital Library

From Kollur one can reach the top of Kudajadri by a 25-km journey — 13 kms by bus, about 8 kms by a trek through forest paths and about 4 kms of steep climb. Better catch an early bus. There are buses around 6-30 A.M., 8 A. M., 10-30 A.M. and 12 A.M. Getting down at Karankatte after a half an hour journey, the three hours' walk before the sun gets hot will be pleasant. With an occasional glimpse of an animal, listening the chirp of a variety of birds, breathing the fresh air laden with the aroma of medicinal herbs and forests flowers, the journey is very refreshing. Although this three hours' forest journey is somewhat arduous, it is a thrilling experience, while acquiring a healthy discipline for the body and mind. After about 8 kms of rather easy walk through the jungles, just before reaching the steep mountain tracts there is a small tea shop where one gets

---

Karankatte, *where the pilgrims to Kudajadri alight from the bus.* *(Photo : Srikant)*

Koviloor Digital Library

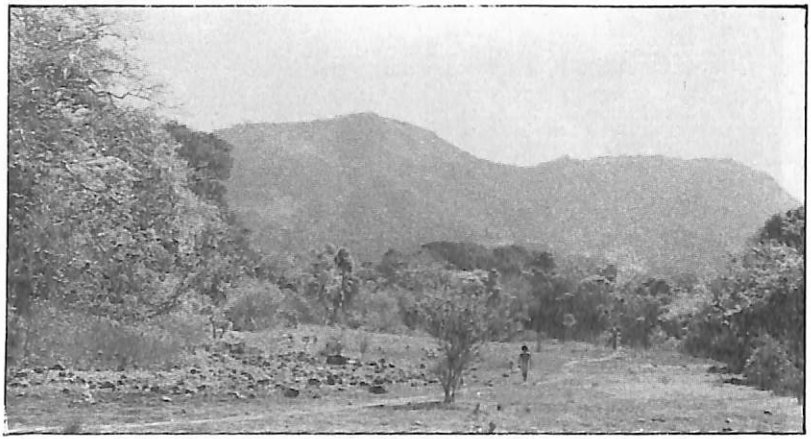
refreshments. Up to this point visitors can go by a sturdy car or jeep. Taking along some fruits and water will add to the pleasantness of this refreshing forest trek.

Two temples

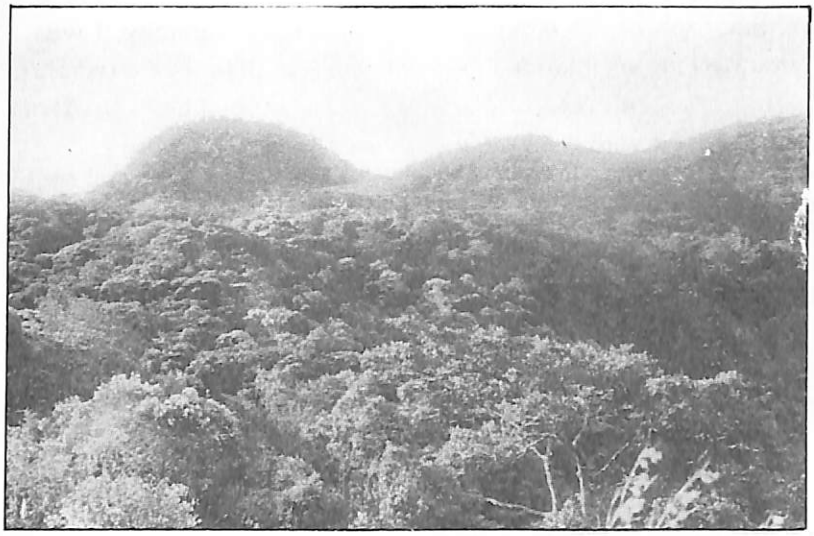
Some improvements have been made recently by widening the path and with steps of rugged forest stones at points of hard climbs rendering the pilgrimage less hazardous. Take minimum luggage to enjoy the journey. Through thick forests, braving the challenging climbs, the pilgrim reaches the lower slopes of the peak of Kudajadri. Here there are two small shrines. In the first shrine the Goddess is worshipped in Her terrific aspect and here meat is often offered in rituals. There is a rectangular iron pillar about 7 metres high in front of the temple. It challenges

---

The long forest path leading to the mountains. (Photo : S.)



Koviloor Digital Library



The rolling mountains ever fresh with lush green tropical forests. In between the four stages of the climb to reach two small shrines, there are bits of plain land for respite. The two shrines and a travellers' bungalow are in between the two peaks on the left. From there a path towards the right takes the pilgrim to the very top of Kudajadri. (Photo : S.)

time and weather like the famous iron pillar of Delhi. The pillar also poses a question mark about our usual concepts of the technological know-how of the ancients.

Iron pillars in Delhi, Germany and Kudajadri-Pointers to some forgotten world civilization?

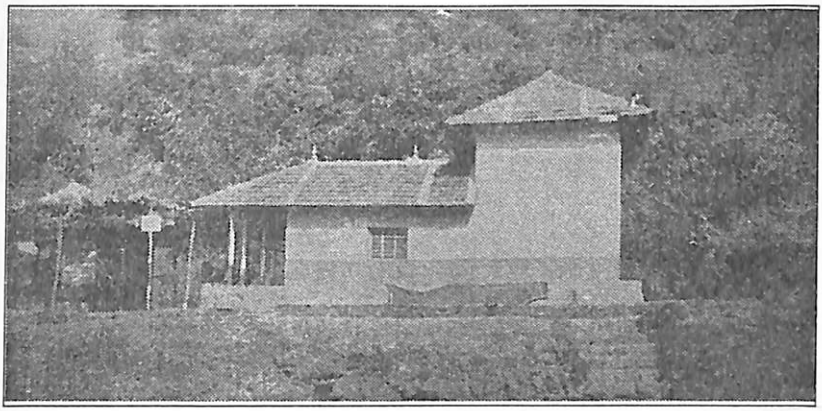
The well-known explorer of ancient mysteries von Erich Daniken tells in his book "The Gold of Gods" about a rectangular iron pillar, locally called the 'Iron Man' at Kottenforst near Bonn in Germany. He says that it has been there from 'time immemorial', surprisingly with no trace of rust, like the famous Iron Pillar

Koviloor Digital Library

of Delhi, a round massive column. Seeing in the book a photograph of the rectangular iron pillar in Germany, I was struck by the semblance it had with the iron pillar in the remote

The temple of Kalabhairava with the rust - proof iron pillar. (Photo : RS)

Koviloor Digital Library



The temple of Divine Mother Uma in the shades of dark, thick forests. (Photo : S)

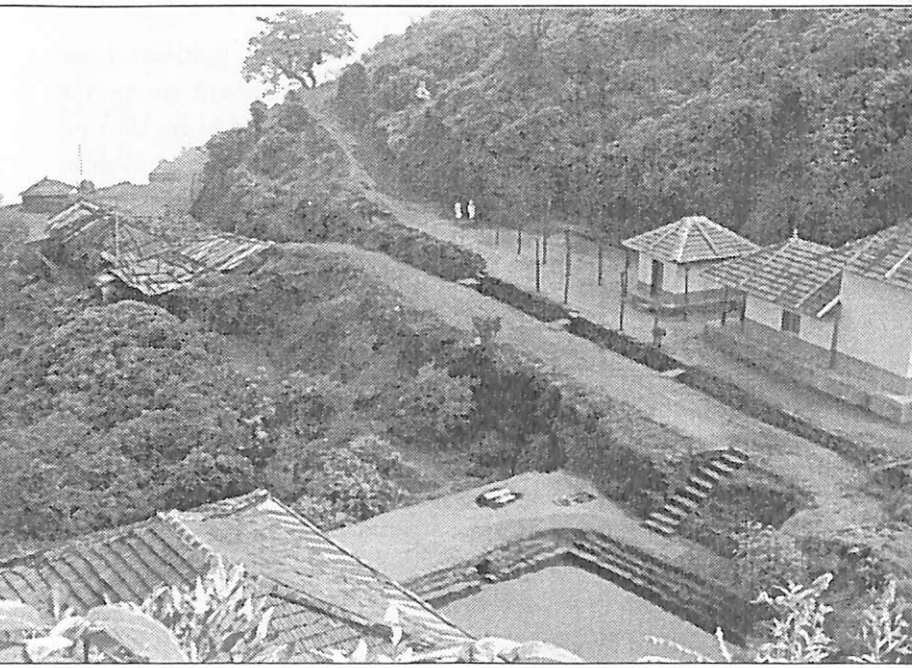
mountain fastness of Kudajadri. Both are rectangular and rust proof! Daniken says that according to the magnetic resistance measurements conducted, the 'Iron Man' is found to be sticking some ninety feet deep into the ground. It is said that a Maharaja of Mysore dug the ground around the Kudajadri pillar to find its other end, but withdrew with awesome reverence seeing it apparently endless!

If rust-proof iron pillars have been existing from remote past in Germany, Delhi and Kudajadri are not these strange relics pointers to some advanced world civilization about which we do not know much?

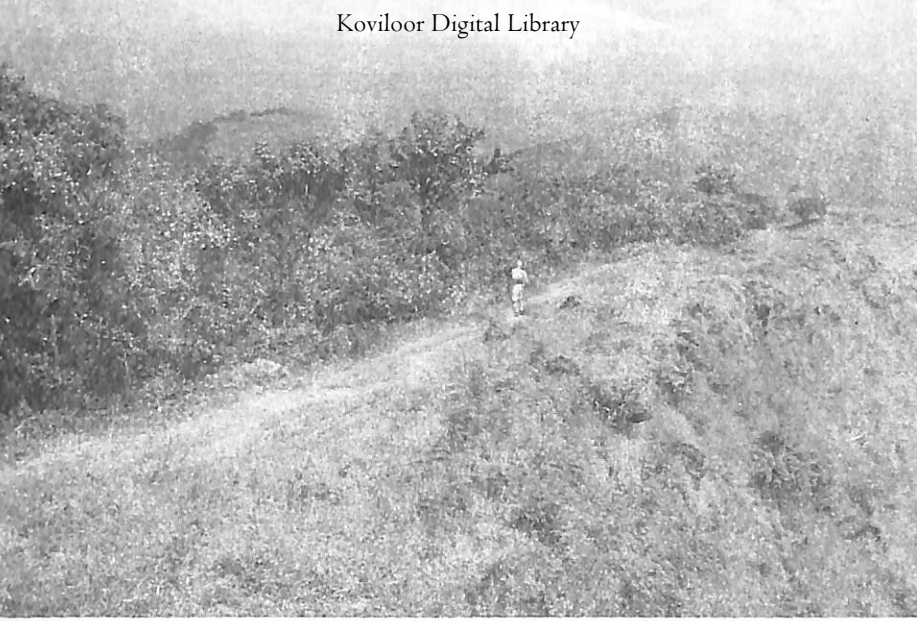
A little further, on a higher elevation is a temple where the Goddess is worshipped in Her most beautiful and merciful form as Uma, where the Vedic rituals are performed. Around this temple there are four sacred springs. There is a small pond

Kamandalu Theertham, on the courtyard of the temple where the pilgrim can have a refreshing dip. Other sacred springs are Sanghu Theertham, Naga Theertham and Gauree Theertham. From here one gets a marvellous view of the awe-inspiring mountain ranges all around. Near each temple there is the residence of the respective priest, where the pilgrims may get accommodation and food. Nearby there is also a small Travellers' Bungalow in this mountain fastness.

At the far left corner is the Kala Bhairava temple with the iron pillar. At the right is the temple of Divine Mother Uma with the pond Kamandalu Theertham below. The house of the priest of Uma temple is at the near left corner. The path from the Uma temple seen towards the right leads to the Travellers' Bungalow.
(Photo : JB)



Koviloor Digital Library



The path that leads further up - to the peak of Kudajadri. (Photo : JB)

The Ganapathi Guha

For further climb to the peak there are two paths. The right-hand path is a little shorter, reaching the cave Ganapathi Guha through Agasthya Theertham and from there proceeding to the top. By taking the left-hand route, the traditional way, one moves through somewhat narrow ridges by the side of perpendicularly descending gorges of about 1400 metres deep with the thick impenetrable forests of tall trees of the Ambavanam, Mother's Gardens, far below appearing almost like a grass meadow ! By going through the traditional way and returning via Agastya Theertham one gets the experience of both. Around Agastya Theertham there are mountain cascades where one can have a cool bath. There are relics of ancient hermitages in this place.

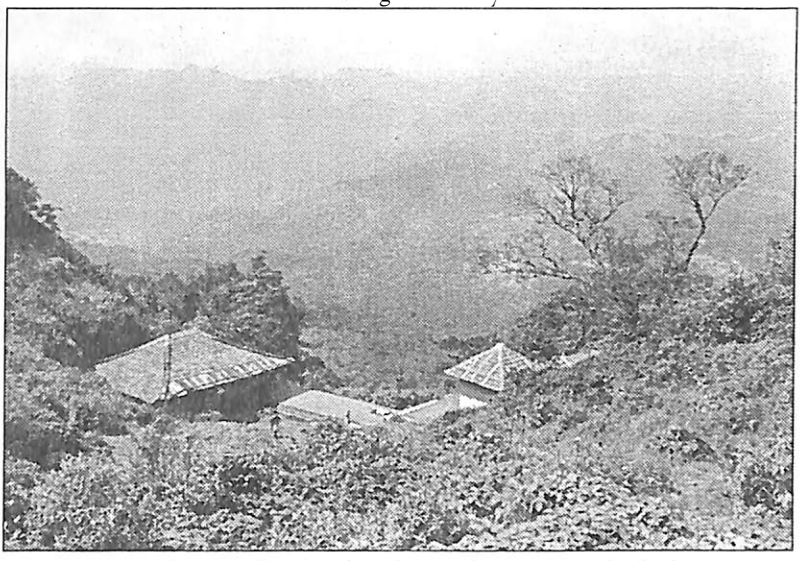
While making some headway through the left-hand route one comes by a diversion towards the right which leads to the Ganapathi Guha. Ganapathi Guha is indeed a very mysterious cave. Inside it there is an ancient and graceful stone idol of Sri Ganesa and also a recently installed statuette of Sri Adi Sankaracharya. The cave-top slopes down to a small crevice at the far end. One would not believe that the simple crevice is, in fact, hiding some mystery. Hesitantly crawling through this crevice one reaches a rather well-shaped tunnel, possibly hand-hewn on the hard metallic rock! It appears to be a thoughtfully camouflaged tunnel. One can go quite some distance through this dark tunnel, but naturally one would not venture much in such a strange region. It is said that the tunnel is leading to very difficult but mysterious zones!

Unforgettable heights of mystic charm

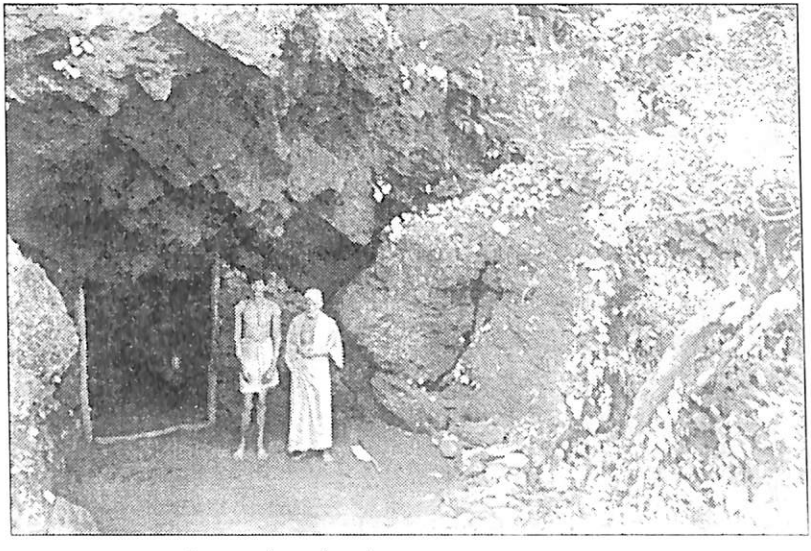
After visiting the Ganapathi Guha, the pilgrim proceeds to the mountain top. As he walks on he comes across inspiring spectacles, deep gorges, mountain ranges, forest scenes, all steeped in a calm, ethereal beauty as if the whole nature is absorbed in a blissful meditation. How mysterious is the primordial beauty of Mother Nature! Rolls of greyish clouds dash against the mountain slopes and surge up to the top to give the pilgrim a welcoming embrace in their misty grip. And lo! suddenly comes to the view at a distance a lonely granite structure — Sarvajna Peeda — like a magic castle in a fairy tale. And the pilgrim speeds up his pace. He is on the top, the very top of the peak of Kudajadri!

Better not to make an attempt to describe the sight from here. It is an ineffable experience of beauty of Nature merging with the beauty within.

Koviloor Digital Library



Another heavenly view of Kudajadri. The temple complex in the high mountain fastness facing the infinite expanse of thin bluish mist caressing the forest trees far below. (Photo: JB)



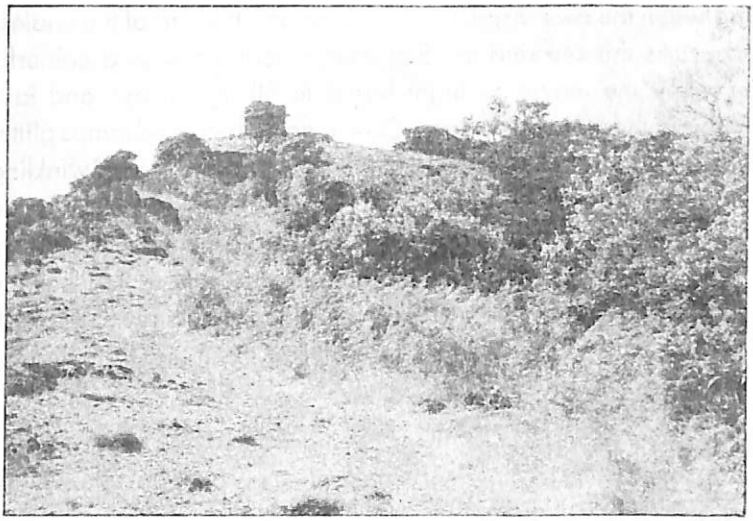
Ganapathi Guha, the mysterious cave (Photo JB)

Koviloor Digital Library

A hermitage near Ganapathi Guha (Photo JB)

This is a sacred region where the spiritual explorers, the Rishis in congenial solitude journeyed into the deeper realms of human consciousness and discovered the great facts of life and of the universe, which the matter-bound scientist cannot perceive. Every sand of this mountain is sacred and should be maintained so. The place should never be allowed to degrade into an ordinary tourist spot, where people gather for evanescent pleasures. A Tapobhoomi, the place of inward pilgrimage to Truth, here man can find the deeper meaning of his life and experience his inner unity with the Eternal Reality.

Koviloor Digital Library



The top of Kudajadri with the Sarvajna Peeda at the pinnacle believed to be built at the place where Sri Adi Sankara sat in beatific union with the Supreme.
(Photo : S)

One resides in infinity here. One is immersed in the total life of nature — of the forests, lakes, rice fields, villages, distant cities, the sea and the infinite sky. Far below, towards the west, one gets a glorious view of the shrine of Sri Mookambika and far beyond that, the blue expanse of the ocean.

Sivaratri atop Kudajadri

In the auspicious Sivaratri night a few pilgrims stay on the mountain top around camp fire while cold winds lash from all sides.

The scenes of sunrise and sunset viewed from the Kudajadri heights will ever linger in the mind. The Sun-god's chariot at last

Koviloor Digital Library

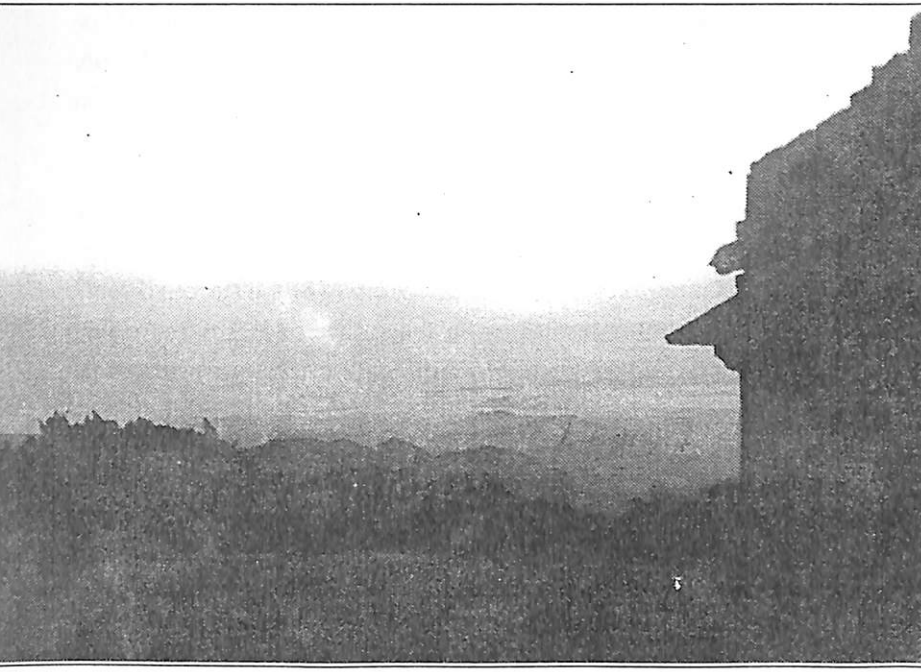
reaches the western horizon above the expanse of the distant sea. It lingers there in fiery splendour — a splendid communion between the awe-inspiring mountains and the lord of the endless sky. As the sea and the Sun merge each other in a colourful mystery the waves of night begin to fill the valleys and lash against the mountain slopes. Down, down below oil lamps glitter in graceful glory in the shrine of Sri Mookambika. Twinkling lights appear in villages, distant cities and in the ships moving in the sea. Some shrubs in the deep jungles seem to emit a strange misty glow. What is that commotion in the forests! Are they the roaming herds of wild buffalos? As the darkness reveals its rich mystery, the pilgrims immerse themselves in singing the hymns of the Divine Mother.

It is midnight. The winds bring with them the mild, sweet fragrance of forest flowers. Suddenly emerge from somewhere vague sounds of drums and gongs! Are they the performance of etherial beings in some invisible world! The sounds seem to be coming nearer. Swinging spots of lights are seen at a distance slowly moving towards the peak. It is the procession from the temple of Bhairavi—the fierce Goddess who shatters the darkness in the human mind. In front there is a huge oil torch. The light has reached the mountain top. As the world slumbers in overwhelming darkness the brilliant light is fixed on the top illuminating the auspicious Sivaratri, which every year reminds mankind of the evolutionary possibility of awakening human consciousness to the freedom of spiritual Enlightenment.

Far away, in the villages, in cities and in many a sacred temple thousands must be seeing the glorious light.

The mountains again immerse themselves in the silence of the night. The night passes its phases—Yaamas—to transform

Koviloor Digital Library



The dawn at the top. The earth turns to be a milky ocean with the mountain-tops projecting like islets in an endless sea of white clouds. (Photo : S)

itself as the sacred early hours of the Brahma Muhurtha. Suddenly all eyes are fixed on the eastern sky—a streak of bright saffron on the pitch dark horizon, the flaming flag of Sun-god's chariot.

And what a transformation it brings on the earth! The earth and the sky turn to be a boundless milky ocean of clouds with waves and ripples in solemn stillness. Tops of the mountain ranges project here and there like islands in the sea. The eastern horizon turns pink, crimson, and then glows with a reddish splendour. And suddenly emerges the auspicious, golden-red,

Koviloor Digital Library

life-giving, fiery wheel. Who will not then, from the depth of his heart chant the ancient Rigvedic hymn, "Let our meditation be on the glorious Light of Savitry. May this Light illumine our minds".

An adventurous descent to the Chitramoola Cave

On reaching the top of the peak, the pilgrim's mind turns westward. He views the steep western slope — a precipice of about 1500 metres ending in the deep forests of the Ambavanam. Almost mid-way of this slope is the holy cave, Chitramoola, where, according to tradition, Adi Sankaracharya had meditated for several days. It is, of course, a hazardous descent. Yet I have seen people even past seventy going down safely to reach the sacret spot.

A little care, of course, is necessary and there are plenty of projecting stones and roots for foot-hold and branches for support. Every step should be careful and firm, resisting the temptation to speed up. Don't hesitate to sit and move if necessary. It is adventurous indeed, and one may feel one is going down to some mysterious world of grandmother's tales. At last the pilgrim reaches the foot of the cave—a gaping opening between gigantic, hard, magnesium-rich boulders. A few feet of careful ascent on the boulders takes him to the very cave, where in solitude, amidst the wondrous scenic charm, many a recluse must have made his bold inward pilgrimage to Truth. Below the cave sprawl the lush, almost impenetrable forests of the Ambavanam.

A remarkable feature of this unique mid-mountain cave is the perennial dramatic flow of water towards the southern part of the opening. It originates somewhere near the mountain top,

Koviloor Digital Library

flows down towards a convenient part of the cave as if to supply the needs of the occupant in the cave. Except this there is no trace of water anywhere near about.

Tradition has it that the water course sprouted miraculously to serve Sri Adi Sankaracharya when he was meditating in the cave.

Maintain the sacredness of Kudajadri

The sublime, lofty peak of Kudajadri, visible from far-off

The mid-mountain cave, Chitramoola. (Photo : JB)

Koviloor Digital Library

distances, with its dense forests hiding many caves and relics of hermitages proclaim that it was a Tapobhumi in the hoary past, the mystic history of which is not well known today. It is a symbol of human striving after Truth through millennia. Who could have been those people who erected the rust-proof iron pillar, who hewed the crevice-camouflaged tunnel in the Ganapathi Guha? Several ancient mysteries are receiving a reverential reassessment today. Our ancient philosophical symbols, places, Puranas and the texts on traditional sciences if well searched into, will yield gems of knowledge that may creatively revolutionize life in today's strife-torn world.

It is said that there is a welcome project to develop Kudajadri. However, let us hope that the place will never be allowed to degrade into an ordinary tourist spot where people gather for evanescent pleasures. It is a Tapobhumi where man can find a deeper meaning in his life, acquire spiritual strength and inner peace. Every sand of this mysterious mountain is sacred and should be maintained so. Inspiring boards may be kept in several points reminding the visitor of his sacred duty.

Spiritual striving is consciously or unconsciously inherent in every man, in every living being. Human mind invariably needs spiritual nourishment to function effectively and to evolve to higher levels of consciousness. Journey to holy places will charge the mind with spiritual strength taking away much of the oppressive burdens from the mind. It is of vital importance that we must maintain the sanctity and natural beauty of such life-nourishing places.

Arasana Kund

About 15 kms north-west of Sri Mookambika shrine, deep

Koviloor Digital Library

in the forests there is a sacred pond called Arasana Kund. The pilgrim first treks his way for about four kilometres through the road extending northwards from the backside of the temple, and on reaching a place called Dali turns left to take a narrow forest path leading eastwards. This path ends in a channel and the pilgrim wades his way through it with overhead arches of bamboo and cane that flourish on both sides, to reach a shallow mountain stream, the Kasi river.

The pilgrim has to walk up the stream placing his steps from one projecting rock to another, and in this process he may sometimes have to use his hands also and move forward like an animal. On both sides are flourishing tropical forests. One may feel a strange sense of having been placed in some primeval period in earth's history. At some places he has to leave the river and climb the mountain slopes before coming down again to the river to continue his ascent. After proceeding about an hour like this he sees the sunrays breaking through the foliage, painting a distant waterfall with the rainbow hues. It falls in a large pond—the goal of the pilgrim, Arasana Kund. He climbs further and reaches there.

Permeated with the scent of forest flowers, the surroundings of the pond give him a perfect sense of spiritual solitude and peace. It is the Kasi river that falls into the pond from quite a height, overflows it and moves downwards to join, in due course, Agni Theertham at Kollur to form Souparnika. The centre of this small lake is said to be very deep and legend has it that the Goddess after destroying the demon Mookasura immersed Her golden chariot in it. Taking bath in the cool water is invigorating. One may notice for a few moments a light golden hue over the body when one takes bath here—considered a unique phenom-

Koviloor Digital Library

enon. That is why the pond is known as Arasanakund, the 'Pond of the Turmeric'. (When going to such unfrequented places as Arasana Kund, Govinda Theertham, etc., one should have a guide).

Arasana Kund (Photo : RS)

Koviloor Digital Library

Govinda Theertham- Nature's unique shower bath

About 18 kms from Kollur, towards the south-east, on the southern side of the Kudajadri peak, is the Govinda Theertham, amidst the deep forests of the Ambavanam. From Kollur the pilgrim may take a route through the southern foot-hills of Kudajadri. He can also choose another route by going first to an agricultural village, Mudoor via Jadkal by bus (about an hour's journey from Kollur) and walking about five kilometres to reach the forest. On entering the jungles, a one-hour climb through the thick forest terrains takes one to Govinda Theertham.

I had been to the place three times and on the last occassion had a sturdy 83 year-old with the energy of a youth and the alertness and humility of a sage, as the guide. When

Koviloor Digital Library

one among us asked him whether he could save anything out of his profession, he just had a loud, hearty laugh, enigmatic like that of a Zen monk, which appeared as if he was telling us that he could save his soul while tauntingly reminding us that even in the midst of that perilous forest our thoughts are occupied with the other savings forgetting the most reassuring wealth in us—the Source Eternal—Mother Mookambika—who we are in our utmost being, for the recollection of which, in fact, we are making all these pilgrimages.

Clutching the boughs, climbing the boulders, the pilgrim advances to the last stage and suddenly stands spellbound by a colossal breath-taking vision. He forgets all his struggles enthralled by the spectacle—a forest river falling headlong as if from the skies through a high gorge and being swirled by the strong forest winds, the sheet of water swinging to and fro like a long piece of cloth, part of it transforming into vaporous spray and rising to join the clouds, while the rest splitting into millions of drops to fall as a natural shower.

After the customary breaking of coconuts, the pilgrim takes really a celestial bath in that unique shower bath of nature, loudly chanting the Lord's Name, 'Govinda, Govinda'

Koviloor Digital Library

Sri Mahalakshmi Ashtakam

TO A CLOSE OBSERVER, Stotras — the hymns on the glory of the Divine — as the *Lalitha Sahasranama, Vishnu Sahasranama,* etc., will reveal their depth and evolutionary significance. With their subtle influence on the mind they help the all-round progress of man. (As the mathematical symbols may seem meaningless to one ignorant in mathematics, to a superficial observer the symbolic letters of a Mantra or Stotra many appear to be of no import). So that the spiritual wisdom should survive the passage of time and serve generations, sages of yore evolved consiousness-expanding spiritual formulae in easily chantable symbolic verses. The inquiring minds will find their inner meaning, and those who repeat them daily will experience spiritual unfoldment. The daily repetition disciplines the mind, makes it bright, serene and efficient.

Stotras promote devotion—the reverence for the Unknown. An effort for communion with our Inner Self, true devotion is the mother of life-expanding knowledge. It has nothing to do with fanaticism. That is why the great Hindu Yogis, sufis of Islam, and saints of Christianity talk in the same transcendental terms about God and the oneness of all His creations. Devotion leads rational enquiry to new expanding horizons. It is complementary to rational wisdom.

Koviloor Digital Library

The following Stotra from the ancient Skanda Purana is in adoration of Sri Mookambika (Kolapuresi). If chanted daily, the sages assure, it will bring Divine guidance, harmony and prosperity.

नमस्ते जगद्धात्रि सद्ब्रह्मरूपे
नमस्ते हरोपेन्द्रधात्रादिवन्द्ये ।
नमस्ते प्रपन्नेष्टदानैकदक्षे
नमस्ते महालक्ष्मि कोलापुरेशि ॥ 1

Namasthay Jagath-dhaathri sad-Brahma-roopay
Namasthay Haropayndra-daathraadi-vandhyay
Namasthay prapannayshta-daanaika-dakshay
Namasthay Mahaalakshmi Kolaapurayshi

O Mother of the Universe, the Supreme Brahman, we prostrate before Thee, who is worshipped by Siva, Upendra, Brahma and other Deities. Prostrations to Thee who fulfils the desires of those taking refuge in Thee. Prostrations to Thee O Mahalakshmi, the Goddess of Kolapura.

विधिः कृत्तिवासा हरिर्विश्वमेतत्
सृजत्यत्ति पातीति यत्तत्प्रसिद्धम् ।
कृपालोकनादेव ते शक्तिरूपे
नमस्ते महालक्ष्मि कोलापुरेशि ॥ 2

Vidhih Krithithivaasaa Harirvishwamaythath
Srijathyaththi paatheethi yaththath-prasidham
Kripaalokanaadeva thay shakthi-roopay
Namasthay Mahaalakshmi Kolaapureshi

Koviloor Digital Library

This universe is created by Lord Brahma. Lord Siva annihilates it. Lord Vishnu protects it. But O Mahalakshmi, it is with the benign look of Thee, whose form is Power itself, they perform all those acts. Prostrations to Thee, O Mahalakshmi, the Goddess of Kolapura.

त्वया मायया व्याप्तमेतत्समस्तं
धृतं लीलया देवि कुक्षौ हि विश्वम् ।
स्थितं बुद्धिरूपेण सर्वत्र जन्तौ
नमस्ते महालक्ष्मि कोलापुरेशि ॥ 3

Thvayaa maayayaa vyaapthamaythath samastham
Dhritham leelayaa Devi kukshou hi vishwam
Sthitham budhiroopayna sarvathra janthou
Namasthay Mahaalakshmi Kolaapurayshi

This whole universe is permeated with Thy Divine Maya, while, O Devi, Thou bear the entire universe playfully in Thy womb. Thou reside in every being in the form of intelligence. Prostrations to Thee O Mahalakshmi, Goddess of Kolapura.

यया भक्तवर्गा हि लक्ष्यन्त एते
त्वयात्र प्रकामं कृपापूर्णदृष्ट्या ।
अतो गीयसे देवि लक्ष्मीरिति त्वं
नमस्ते महालक्ष्मि कोलापुरेशि ॥ 4

Yayaa bhakthavargaa hi lakshyantha aethay
Tvayaathra prakaamam Kripapoornadrishtyaa
Atho geeyasay Devi Lakshmeerithi thvam
Namasthay Mahaalakshmi Kolaapurayshi

Koviloor Digital Library

O Devi, as Thou cast Thy benign glance on all Thy devotees, Thou art called Mahalakshmi. Prostrations to Thee O Mahalakshmi, Goddess of Kolapura.

पुनर्वाक्पटुत्वादिहीना हि मूका
नरैस्तैर्निकामं खलु प्रार्थ्यसे यत् ।
निजेष्टाप्तये तच्च मूकाम्बिका त्वं
नमस्ते महालक्ष्मि कोलापुरेशि ॥ 5

Punar-vaak-patuthvaadi-heenaa hi mookaa
Naraisthair-nikaamam khalu praardhyasay yath
Nijayshtaapthayay thachcha Mookaambikaa thvam
Namasthay Mahaalakshmi Kolaapurayshi

Those who lack intelligence and power of expression pray earnestly for Thy Grace and Thou raise them endowing them with talents and wisdom. Therefore Thou art known as Mookambika. Prostrations to Thee O Mahalakshmi, Goddess of Kolapura.

यदद्वैतरूपात्परब्रह्मणस्त्वं
समुत्थापुनर्विश्वलीलोद्यमस्था ।
तदाहुर्जनास्त्वां हि गौरीं कुमारीं
नमस्ते महालक्ष्मि कोलापुरेशि ॥ 6

Yad-advaitha-roopaath-Parabrahmanasthvam
Samudhaa punarvishwa leelodyamasthaa
Thadaahoor janaasthvaam hi Gaureem Kumaareem
Namasthay Mahaalakshmi Kolaapurayshi

O Devi, Thou manifested Thyself from the One indivisible Brahman. Thou then engaged in the play of creation. As one engaging in creative activity, Thou art called Gouri and as the playful one, Thou art called Kumari. Prostrations to Thee O Mahalakshmi, Goddess of Kolapura.

Koviloor Digital Library

हरीशादिदेहोत्थतेजोमयप्र-
स्फुरच्चक्रराजाख्यलिङ्गस्वरूपे ।
महायोगि कोलर्षिहृत्पद्मगेहे
नमस्ते महालक्ष्मि कोलापुरेशि ॥ 7

Hareeshaadi-dayhothdha thayjomayapra-
Spurachchakra-raajaakhya-lingaswaroopay
Mahaayogi Kolarshi-hrithpadma gayhay
Namasthay Mahaalakshmi Kolaapurayshi

Srichakra, the king of the mystic symbols, which emanated from the very splendour of Lord Mahavishnu, Lord Siva and other Deities is Thy Form. Prostrations to Thee O Mahalakshmi Goddess of Kolapura, who resides in the lotus heart of the Maha Yogi Kola Maharshi.

नमः शङ्खचक्राभयाभीष्टहस्ते
नमस्तेऽम्बिके गौरि पद्मासनस्थे ।
नमः स्वर्णवर्णे प्रसन्ने शरण्ये
नमस्ते महालक्ष्मि कोलापुरेशि ॥ 8

Namah samkha-chakraabhayaa-bheeshta hasthay
Namasthay Ambikay Gauri padmaasanasthay
Namah swarna-varnay prasannay sharanyay
Namasthay Mahaalakshmi Kolaapurayshi

Prostrations to Thee O Devi who hold in Thy four arms the conch, the discus and the mystic symbols Abhaya and Abheeshta Mudras. Prostrations to Thee, Mother, who sits in mystic pose of Padmasana. Prostrations to Thee, the graceful refuge of all, the golden hued, the Blissful. Prostrations to Thee O Mahalakshmi, Goddess of Kolapura.

Koviloor Digital Library

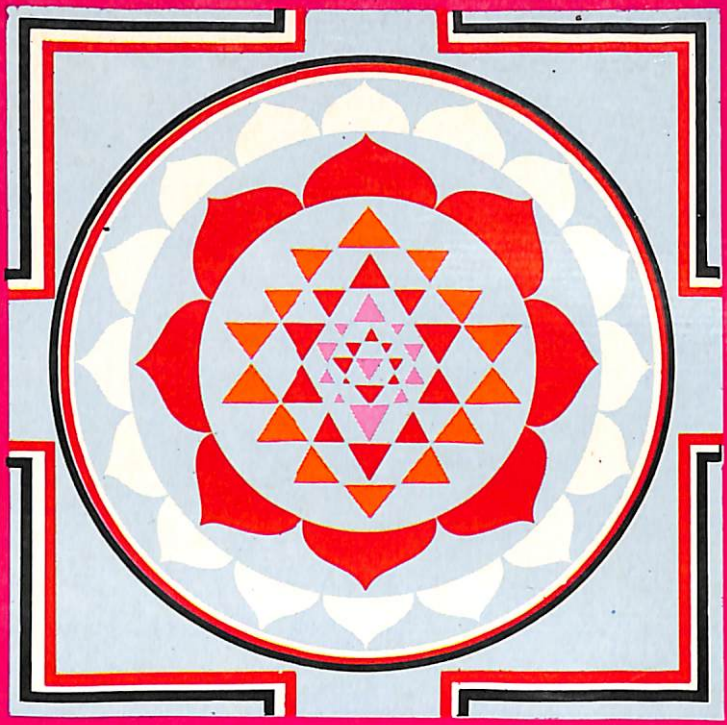
इदं स्तोत्ररत्नं कृतं सर्वदैव
हृदि त्वां समाधाय लक्ष्म्यष्टकं यः ।
पठेन्नित्यमेष व्रजत्याशु लक्ष्मीं
सुविद्यां च सत्यं भवत्याः प्रसादात् ॥

Edam sthothra-rathnam kritham sarvadaiva
Hridi thvaam samaadhaaya Lakshmyashtakam yah
Padaynnithyamaysha vrajathyaashu Lakshmeem
Suvidhyaam cha sathyam bhavathyaah prasaadaath

Those who chant everyday this great Stotra that emanated from the devoted hearts of all the Devas will be blessed with prosperity and knowledge by the Grace of Sri Mookambika. Know this to be certain.

Koviloor Digital Library

Koviloor Digital Library



From time immemorial, the Temple of Sri Mookambika, the Divine Mother, has been a perennial Source of mightly spiritual energy activating the dormant spiritual potentials of man in his evolutionary march towards Fulfilment. The Divine Mother gives powerful stimulus to countless pilgrims in their quest for Blessedness, Perfection and Freedom.

The book lucidly presents the salient features of invoking the Mother-Principle immanent in the universe. It expounds some subtle aspects of the hoary spiritual wealth and wisdom of India, her immortal vision and message to the whole humanity.

by SRIKANT